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Metaphysics as Christology

An Odyssey of the Self from Kant
and Hegel to Steiner

JONAE SCHICKLER

METAPHYSICS AS CHRISTOLOGY

The author, Jonael Schickler, was killed in the Potters Bar rail accident just as he was completing this manuscript. The script he left behind is a work of high academic calibre that reflects the extraordinary intellectual ability of its author. It develops a highly original argument, grounded in a philosophical consideration of Kant and Hegel, but developing a resolution of their philosophical legacy in a way that, influenced by Rudolf Steiner, the author argues has Christological significance. The intellectual brilliance and charismatic personality of the author, the originality and intellectual seriousness of his work, and his tragic and untimely death, all combine to make this book the focus of considerable interest.

Fraser Watts, Queen's College, Cambridge

In *Metaphysics as Christology*, Jonael Schickler presents a major contribution to both philosophy and theology. First he examines the key philosophical problems with which Kant and Hegel grappled, and finds in the work of Rudolf Steiner the essence of a solution to them; he claims that Steiner returned to Hegel's philosophical problems but was better able to solve them. Schickler uses these philosophical debates about knowledge and truth to understand the significance of Christ.

Building on the work of Hegel, Schickler argues that Christ has made possible the developments in human consciousness that restore humanity's relationship to the surrounding world. This is a bold and rigorous work that opens up new directions in both philosophy and theology. Fraser Watts contributes the Foreword and George Pattison an extensive Preface.

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Dedicated to Nick Green in friendship and gratitude

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Foreword

This book is being published posthumously, and it falls to me to explain the circumstances. It was prepared as a doctoral thesis in the University of Cambridge but, before the thesis had been submitted, the author died, at the age of 25, in the rail accident at Potters Bar. Jonael Schickler was a remarkable young man. Had he lived, this book would no doubt have been the first of many. He had the intellectual and personal qualities to make a substantial impact on contemporary thought, and he made a deep impression on all who knew him.

He came to Cambridge as an undergraduate, to study social and political sciences but, after his first year, changed to philosophy. On graduating, he spent a period studying in Berlin and then, with my encouragement, returned to Cambridge to work on a doctoral thesis. Initially, he was supervised by myself, and later by Dr George Pattison (then Dean of King's College, Cambridge; now Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford). Jonael taught extensively in his three years as a research student, and was an inspiring and charismatic teacher for the many students who had the good fortune to come into contact with him. He opened their eyes to the excitement of philosophy in a way that they will never forget.

Jonael Schickler had a rigorous clarity of thought, and was never content with ill-formed ideas. In reading the work of others, he wrestled until he was quite satisfied that he knew exactly what was being said. In his own thinking, he worked equally hard for clarity. His thinking was not dry and merely abstract, but drew on personal qualities as well as merely intellectual capacities. He believed in the importance of imagination in thinking, and in a kind of thinking that arises from the whole person, not just from the intellect.

This book reflects the importance of Rudolf Steiner for Jonael. Steiner is perhaps best known for his practical work in education and other pursuits, but he was also a visionary, and a theoretical thinker with a comprehensive world view. All his concerns found their proper place within a complete, integrative system of thought. In this book, Schickler approaches Steiner's work in a purely philosophical way, and argues that Steiner had successfully synthesized the transcendental approach of Kant and the dialectical approach of Hegel, without falling into the pitfalls of either. His focus here is largely on Hegel, but he works towards a philosophical interpretation of Steiner.

The book published here forms a part of a large-scale research enterprise on which Jonael Schickler was engaged. First, there was work on Aristotle's ontology, which he had completed and which it may be possible to publish separately. The present work on Kant, Hegel, and their resolution in Steiner, forms the second part of the project. Third, there was to be a consideration of phenomenology and depth psychology, represented by Nietzsche, Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Jung. Fourth, there was to be

an elaboration of Herbert Witzmann's 'structural phenomenology', not so far translated into English. Fifth and last, there was to be an application of the insights gained in the first four parts to an understanding of living forms.

Finally, it may be helpful to explain the Christian element in what is essentially a philosophical book. Jonael Schickler adopted Rudolf Steiner's grand vision of the impact of Christ on the unfolding of human consciousness. On this view, the resurrection of Christ is encountered in the thought processes of humanity, and Schickler argued on purely philosophical grounds that the resurrection was a necessary condition for ordinary thought and experience. He did not espouse a partisan form of Christianity that divided Christians from others. Rather, his Christology arose from a broad view of the significance of Christ for humanity as a whole.

Jonael's friend, Nick Green, to whom this book was dedicated, has played an indispensable role in checking and correcting the manuscript, and preparing it for publication in its present form. I am most grateful to him for his painstaking work. There was probably no one who was more familiar with Jonael's work and thinking.

It is deeply puzzling when someone as admirable and gifted as Jonael Schickler dies at the threshold of what would surely have been a remarkable life's work. However, he himself would have wanted to look for a spiritual purpose in his death, rather than to dismiss it as just an unfortunate accident. Much that he would have achieved will no longer be possible. However, it is good that the present book is being published to make available to a broader audience some of what he had achieved already as a philosopher. It stands as a testimony to what he had already achieved, and as a memorial to him.

Fraser Watts
Queens' College, Cambridge

Preface

The three short words of the title Jonael Schickler had chosen for his PhD thesis not only condense the topic that the thesis addresses, they also epitomize the clear difference between Schickler's intellectual ambitions and most of what is done under the rubrics of 'philosophy' and 'theology' in the contemporary academy. Whether in its continental or Anglo-Saxon forms, philosophy has long since given up on metaphysics, and even if, here or there, some small concessions are made to the legitimacy of metaphysical questions, they are applied only within the most modest of boundaries. True, one line of continental philosophy is avowedly suspicious of the ongoing nostalgia for metaphysical thinking in philosophy itself, but this discernment is in the cause of unmasking and deconstructing that same metaphysical remnant rather than endorsing it. Theology, perhaps predictably, is less hostile to metaphysics and, as might be expected, more than welcoming of Christology. However, even in theology the commitment to metaphysics is patchy at best. Thomists – and there can be no doubt that St Thomas is having something of a revival at the moment – are robust in their defence of the Master's commitment to metaphysics as an appropriate preparation for thinking about the fullness of Christian truth. Yet few Thomists would want to see metaphysics *as* Christology and would distinguish between the grounds and spheres of application of these two disciplines. As Augustine was already aware, there are things that Christians want to say about Christ that, since they have their source in the singular historical revelation of Scripture, cannot be deduced from any metaphysical premises, no matter how necessary these may be in their own right.

In twentieth century Protestant theology, the essentially non-metaphysical nature of Christology has been virtually taken for granted. A major influence behind this near-consensus, was Karl Barth, who not only denied the legitimacy of using philosophy as a preparation for faith but even denied that there could be any point of contact between the core discourse of theology and other forms of intellectual or cultural discourse. Paul Tillich, one of the few Protestant theologians of the last hundred years to have seriously attempted to integrate theology and metaphysics, might be cited as a significant counter-example, but it is characteristic for Tillich's modernism that even his metaphysics – though articulated in terms of an ontology – attempted to incorporate the anguished voice of existential subjectivity in a manner, I suspect, that was essentially alien to Schickler's problematic. Something similar could, indeed, be said of a great Catholic modern such as Karl Rahner. Both take as their starting point the split that Schickler's project aimed to show as stemming from a misdescription of human reality. To add to the sheer difference of Schickler's project from most of what is done today under the rubric of philosophical theology, he not only wants to talk about Christology but also to deal with 'resurrection' as a metaphysical issue. Here we could go much further back than Karl Barth, back to

St Paul himself for illustrations of a sensed incompatibility between philosophy and resurrection-talk (cf. Acts 17). Although one leading modern Christologist, Wolfhart Pannenberg, has wanted to insist on resurrection as a fundamental pre-Christian horizon that belongs essentially to Christology, Pannenberg's own original formulation of the thesis acknowledges that precisely because it is resurrection that is being talked about, i.e., a state beyond the limits of this mortal life, it is not, as such, the matter of knowledge in any generalizable, philosophical sense.

Schickler, then, would seem to have set himself a highly original, not to say unique task – and, some might say, Quixotic. But the figures who are key to his project are also central to the well-rehearsed story of the modern divorce between philosophy and faith – Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche. This, then, is not a case of philosophical niche marketing. Indeed, in its larger form, Schickler's project would have encompassed the whole range of Western philosophy, from Aristotle to Heidegger (and he had already done an impressive amount of work towards this), but, as far as the present study is concerned, the focus on these three great representatives of post-Enlightenment thought serve to show the scope and the challenge of Schickler's self-imposed task. For framing the thesis in these terms immediately makes clear the relevance of Schickler's project to the agenda of post-Heideggerian continental philosophy, and it is in this context that the following introductory remarks are chiefly to be read.

Hegel is, in many ways, the centre of this present study. As Schickler reads him, he is attempting to overcome the notorious Kantian dualism and definitively to demonstrate the unity of thought and being. For philosophers in the line from Kierkegaard to Derrida it is largely Hegel's claim to have managed to do this and to have re-founded philosophy in a more radical, if subjectivized, substantiality that arouses their suspicion. Such a project, they maintain, is intrinsically unrealizable, *ergo* the claim to have realized it must necessarily be spurious. From the point of view of a human being living this side of the Messianic Kingdom, all attempts to bring off the fusion of thought and being must necessarily be illusory, and the fallibility of the Hegelian synthesis is therefore to be ridiculed or deconstructed without mercy or remainder. Schickler's line of criticism is different. He agrees that Hegel failed to achieve what he set out to achieve. But, for Schickler, the problem is not the inherent impossibility of the task. The problem is simply that Hegel failed to dig deep enough to bring it off.

Already in his discussion of Kant, Schickler had found in Kant's non-critical writings hints towards a larger background that might help open a non-dualist perspective. Now, in Hegel, he sees a yet clearer adumbration of the ground on which such non-dualism is to build. Yet, infuriatingly, Hegel fails to see the philosophical significance of such phenomena as sympathy, clairvoyance and animal magnetism that mark the transition from the sphere of nature to that of subjective Spirit. Here, argues Schickler, are clues that could have provided for the ontological grounding that Hegel finally sought in logic – if only he had taken them seriously. For it is precisely in the domain of *soul*, defined by Hegel himself as the unity of individual and universal life, that an ontological basis could have been established for the supervening category of Spirit. Just at this point, however, Hegel becomes philosophically vague and seems almost to brush aside the significance implicit in what he himself is saying. In the end this omission leaves Hegel to the much-criticized overemphasis on the intellectual aspect of subjectivity, to the detriment of Spirit's ground in nature.

It is worth commenting, in passing, that Schickler's attention to this part of Hegel's system is very much to be welcomed. As far as mainstream modern European philosophy has been concerned, this has until recently been a consistently understudied area. Hegel's politics, theory of law, aesthetics, understanding of history and logic have all received extensive comment in the secondary literature, but the philosophy of nature and the doctrine of subjective Spirit have been largely passed over in silence. Perhaps philosophers have been frightened off by the uninformed dismissal of Hegel by critics from the scientific and empiricist camp (see, e.g., Bronowski's remarks in *The Ascent of Man*) and a sense that his science must, somehow, be inevitably outdated in a way that his social thought is not. Schickler's work here is, hopefully, a sign of a welcome shift in critical focus.

Now, whether it is to be seen as a strength or a weakness, it is by no means hard to detect a certain Christological pattern in Hegel's system, and some commentators would see Christology as the catalyst for the very evolution of the system in the first place. It is harder to glimpse a Christological interest in Friedrich Nietzsche. Thus, it is, interestingly, clear that where Hegel speaks of the death of God (as he does), this is very specifically in connection with Christ, but when Nietzsche takes up the theme this Christological background has vanished. Yet, even here Schickler sees what he himself describes as 'the seeds of a latent Christology in Nietzsche' (p. 162).

Once more, Schickler's take on the subject goes against the mainstream of contemporary interpretation. Where recent philosophy has resolutely insisted on seeing Nietzsche in anti-metaphysical, anti-religious terms, and held fast to his vitalistic materialism, Schickler wants to show that even if Nietzsche did not adequately grasp his own best intuitions, the privileging of the body is not to be interpreted in merely materialistic terms. Nietzsche almost – but not quite – gives us a vision of a truly religious non-dualism in which we see 'God's showing so much love for the earth, the body and man that, through his Son, he embraces them before man's very eyes in an act of resurrection' – where 'the idea of resurrection actually transcends the opposition of this and other-worldliness' (p. 167). Such a Nietzsche is very different from 'The New Nietzsche' profiled in David Allison's representative 1970s anthology of that title. He is not entirely without precedent, however, and, in an intriguing footnote, Schickler points to some of the readings of Nietzsche in the Russian religious philosophy of the early 1900s as also offering a potentially Christian Nietzsche.

More central to Schickler's own project, however, is the encounter between Rudolf Steiner and Nietzsche. Steiner visited Nietzsche on his sick-bed and Steiner's own achievement can, according to Schickler, be the fulfilling of what, in Nietzsche, was only a fragmented and distorted vision.

If Hegel is the centre of this study, Steiner is its climax. Indeed, it is implicit in the thesis and it was clear from every conversation with Schickler that all of his work was but the prolegomenon to the study and interpretation of Steiner. Schickler did not, of course, expect an easy ride in introducing into the discourse of modern philosophy a thinker who wrote of etheric and astral realities. To a limited extent that is part of the point of the thesis, namely to show that Steiner is not to be sidelined into the category of 'occult' literature but belongs to the history of ideas that comprises the undeniably mainstream philosophers dealt with in the bulk of the thesis. More particularly, Schickler claims that Steiner's work not only picks up on some of the key questions of the tradition, but resolves them in ways that neither Kant nor Hegel nor Nietzsche

were able to do. This resolution culminates in Steiner's Christology which, as such, is also a doctrine of resurrection.

Yet there is a problem, and it is a problem many readers will find insurmountable. For to accept Schickler's conclusion, we would also have to accept the existence of a larger range of cognitive faculties than those recognized by natural science and, for that matter, by everyday common sense. Indeed, to go the whole way would require not merely accepting the hypothesis of such esoteric forms of cognition, it would also require us to exercise these faculties and to draw the knowledge they make available into the frame of philosophical reasoning. Schickler is not unaware of this problem, nor, I think, was he unaware that it would be impossible adequately to address it within the closing pages of the thesis. What, then, does he offer? Firstly, he shows the intrinsic connection between Steiner's *Fragestellung* and that of the mainstream philosophers we have been considering. In other words, whatever else we may think of Steiner, we have to recognize that he did not simply appear out of the mists of fin de siècle mysticism but was a genuine inheritor of the central problems of idealist philosophy. Secondly, he shows that, whether or not we accept the hypothesis, the idea of such forms of cognition is not inherently irrational but, indeed, answers to what Kant might have called a need of reason.

Cognitive capabilities of the kind claimed by Steiner and accepted by Schickler would, as the latter argues, open up the possibility of a far more thorough-going kind of phenomenology than that associated with Husserl and his (largely) materialistic heirs. It would be a phenomenology that could truly go all the way towards that fundamental ontology sought, but never found, by Heidegger – another thinker with whom Schickler was crucially in dialogue, even if that scarcely shows through in the present work. That it is not inappropriate to talk of phenomenology in this context is indicated by the fact that Steiner himself acknowledges a kinship with the early phenomenological writings of Franz Brentano, though he himself wishes to go further than Brentano.

It is really only in the final pages that Schickler really starts to broach the Christological and resurrectional dimensions of his project. This reflects a self-limitation partly necessitated by the form of a PhD thesis. Yet the fact that we are thus, in conclusion, offered only the merest sketch of what an answer to the question guiding the work might have looked like is not negative. To show the possibility of a question is, in philosophical work, already something.

But I return to the question concerning the relationship between Schickler's work and contemporary philosophy and theology. One could, of course, easily imagine the glee of those empiricist critics of the metaphysical tradition who might find an unlikely ally in Schickler insofar as he really does succeed in demonstrating the continuity between Steiner and nineteenth century German idealism. 'I told you so', such a scoffer might chortle, 'if you want to be an idealist, you really do need to be a mystic as well'. And from their point of view, they'd be right. From Schickler's point of view – and although this is not stated in the thesis, it was something he often stated in conversation – such 'philosophers' are themselves to be charged with selling the riches of the philosophical heritage for a mess of pottage (or, more precisely, for a footnote in the history of reductive science). More interesting would be the response of those critics of metaphysics found in and around Heidegger and the deconstructive radicalization of his later thought. Here too, though in a very different tonality from

anything we find in Schickler's work, there is a recognition that philosophy is not a self-sufficient entity, that it always relies upon a 'more' that is left unsaid or unwritten, a recognition that, in recent years, has reopened a dialogue between philosophy and apophatic or negative theology. There is at least a conversation to be had between those who see the transcendence of philosophy as leading to acts of unknowing beyond the limits of all possible cognition and discourse, and those, like Steiner, who, at the point where others find the beginnings of unknowing, claim the stirrings of new cognitive capacities.

Whatever might be the case in relation to philosophy, however, there is no doubt that Schickler has raised important questions for theology. Again, these might most easily be put in a somewhat negative form. We frequently encounter a line of argument in modern theology in which one or other theologian is taken to task for being too 'subjective' or for failing to provide adequate ontological grounds for this or that point of doctrine. But what is the basis of the theologians' 'objectivity' or 'ontology'? From within the community of believing theologians the data of the Christian revelation and the guarantees offered by Scripture or the Teaching Office of the Church are sufficient to do the job. Seen from outside that community, however, these 'objective' and 'ontological' bases have no greater *a priori* claim on our acceptance than the deliverances of Steiner's esoteric knowledge. In each case an ontological ground is sought or posited in a domain that is not a part of our generally accepted public or academic knowledge. What, from one point of view, is deemed 'ontological' is, from another angle, 'poetry' or 'mysticism'. And, whichever angle one chose, how, then, would one begin to distinguish between those forms of poetry and mysticism known as Christian theology and those labelled esotericism? How, within the regions of being unacknowledged by the dominant knowledge of our day (reductive science), could one begin to make judgments as to what is good, better, best, what is more or less fitting or appropriate?

As I have indicated, Schickler himself would not have claimed to have made good the case for the deliverances of Steinerian esoteric cognition, though the thesis does constitute an argument for the admissibility of such cognitions. Even at the limited point it reaches, however, there is already scope for significant dialogue with contemporary theology and for argument as to how the 'undiscovered country' of non-scientific knowledge is best interpreted. The fruitfulness of such dialogue would, I think, depend on theology becoming far more willing to accept the good faith of alternative metaphysical scenarios – let's just say alternative metaphysical Christologies – than it, probably, mostly is. I hope Schickler finds a successor with the argumentative force to make theology listen. For whilst I do not think that the most urgent need of contemporary dogmatic theology is to become literate in the language of esotericism, I do think that it has an urgent need to expand the rather limited vocabulary and the still more limited grammar to which it has recently tied itself. If nothing else, it might learn, from reflecting on the possibilities of such higher cognitions as Schickler proposes, to become itself a little more sensitive, a little more attentive, and a little more finely tuned to the subtler vibrancies of the human spirit.

My own approach, I admit, takes a different tack. Schickler's work highlights a number of real issues confronting any contemporary philosophy of religion or religious philosophy that wants to make a genuine contribution to human spiritual life. But do we actually need to retain the ambition of a fundamental, unifying ontology in

order to be faithful to the exigencies of the spiritual life? Do we need to demonstrate the objectivity or the ontological solidity of the world-view within which our religious practices are embedded? Or might we do better to train ourselves to make do with a life-view that sits light to the claims of each and every world-view, as Albert Schweitzer long ago encouraged us to do? ‘No!’ Schickler would surely retort, ‘You are accepting too easily the restrictions of Kantian scepticism.’ I would have to admit that he is right – except in one thing. It is not ‘too easily’, for although I regard the completion of *any* metaphysical system – Thomist, Hegelian or Steinerian – as, finally, beyond our human capacities, it is not ‘too easy’ to live in the strange tension of a life-view requiring total personal commitment unbuttressed by the kind of world-view that metaphysics offers. As mysticism and as poetry, I cannot spurn the support of metaphysics, of Christ, of resurrection – but I am not persuaded that I need to accept them as philosophy, as *knowledge*. What could move me from saying of one or other proffered vision that it is attractive – and even helpful – to affirming that it is true? Nothing, perhaps, short of overpowering revelation itself! In this regard, then, I cannot share Schickler’s metaphysical optimism. Yet if Schickler does not – and perhaps cannot (‘cannot’ for reasons deeper than the word-limit placed on a PhD thesis) – deliver on the promise contained in the three words ‘Metaphysics as Christology’, his work achieves something subtler and, I think, ultimately more important: he exemplifies the fact that the fundamental questions of philosophy and the core aspirations of Christianity have a natural affinity that is proving to have outlived several centuries in which both have been relentlessly and often devastatingly criticized. Whilst I regard the philosophical questions as inherently unanswerable and the religious aspirations as inherently unfulfillable, I believe that the questions deserve to be asked, and the aspirations deserve to be nurtured. For this asking and this nurturing, in, with and under the conditions of temporal existence, are integral to the human condition. They are not perhaps the meaning or the fulfilment of either philosophy or religion, but they are their life-blood – not the possession of truth, but its infinite pursuit: the intellectual eros that is too deeply in love with wisdom ever to claim to be wise. That passion, at least, pulses in every sentence of the thesis as it did in Schickler’s life.

George Pattison
University of Oxford

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Author's Summary

This book seeks to represent the esoteric metaphysics of Rudolf Steiner as a means of overcoming the opposition between transcendental and dialectical thought.¹ The representative of transcendentalism considered is Kant; that of dialectic, Hegel. Although a philosophical interpretation of Steiner's thought is the end goal, the central focus is the metaphysics of Hegel. This is presented and criticized in the light of a single thesis: that its logical dimension is ontologically under-determined, the main reason for which can be traced to Hegel's failure to respond satisfactorily to Kant's scepticism concerning our ability to know the ground of our sensory intuitions. I defend this thesis in the context of critical discussions of Hegel's *Logic of the Concept*² and the anthropology of his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*.

I then argue that Steiner retains the central achievements of both Kant and Hegel without falling prey to their respective failings. This integration of transcendentalism and dialectic is achieved by an ontological conception of the conditions of experience and knowledge, which is framed theoretically by the logical constraints of dialectic, and so is historicist. The basis of Steiner's ontology is a four-fold conception of the human organization and of reality, which can be seen as the most recent successor of Aristotle's division of man into a physical body and vegetative, sensitive and intellectual souls.³ The most complete expression of Steiner's synthesis of transcendentalism and dialectic is his Christology, and particularly his conception of resurrection. Drawing on some of Steiner's discoveries, this book thus defends the thesis, *on purely philosophical grounds*, that the possibility of the resurrection of a physical body is a necessary condition of ordinary thought and experience.

Notes

- 1 Esoteric thought can be defined as thought whose content derives from experience gained through the exercise of organs of cognition which reveal a sensory reality hidden from ordinary experience. See chapter 7.
- 2 'The Logic of the Concept' ('*die Begriffslogik*') refers both to *Die subjektive Logik oder die Lehre vom Begriff*, the second and final part (and third book) of *Wissenschaft der Logik* and to the corresponding part of the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*. Similarly, 'the Logic of Being' ('*die Seinslogik*') refers to *Die Lehre vom Sein* and 'the Logic of Essence' ('*die Wesenslogik*') refers to *Die Lehre vom Wesen*. These two books make up *Die objektive Logik*, the first part of the *Science of Logic*, and their titles are used in the *Encyclopaedia* as well. Miller (*Hegel's Science of Logic* (1969) and *Hegel's Logic* (1975)) translates the three titles as 'The Doctrine of Being', 'The Doctrine of Essence' and 'The Doctrine of the Notion'.
- 3 This division is made by Aristotle in his *De Anima*.

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Introduction: An Odyssey of the Self

What is the self; what am I? No question of modern philosophy has been asked as keenly as this one, and with good reason, for the answer we give it is also our answer to the question ‘What is the world?’. I cannot know the world until, being part of the world, I know myself, and I cannot know myself until I know the world; for as Nietzsche’s mouthpiece Zarathustra puts it, “the belly of being does not speak to man except as man”.¹

This book considers the self-world relation in the metaphysics of Kant, Hegel and Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925).² Steiner has in many ways been the twentieth century’s best kept secret.³ I shall argue, however, that his thought offers the most successful fulfilment of the post-Kantian German Idealists’ aim of conceiving self and world or spirit and nature as a unity. Steiner’s conception of this unity has considerable implications for many disciplines, including philosophy, theology and the natural sciences. Though some of these are mentioned as my argument unfolds, the focus is its philosophical implications and, in the end, its implications for a genuine Christo-logic.

Although an interpretation of Steiner’s vision of the self is the goal of this book, its main focus is the metaphysics of Hegel and his attempt to overcome the scepticism of Kant’s transcendental idealism. Of all modern philosophers, it is Hegel who conceived the most ambitious attempt to give a complete answer to the question of the self-world relation: the question of how the self might come to self-knowledge in overcoming its opposition to the world. It will be argued, however, that though magnificent in many ways, Hegel’s attempt ultimately suffers from a decisive shortcoming: his philosophical logic – given expression through the dialectical method – is under-determined ontologically. Hegel, in other words, failed to translate his philosophical vision of a unity of subject and object into the language of being. It will be demonstrated that he thereby failed to overcome significant elements of Kant’s scepticism, and that to overcome Kant successfully, Hegel’s discoveries need to be married with those of Steiner.

The book thus has a loosely dialectical structure. Kant’s transcendental idealism is the thesis – he sets out in a negative way the challenges to be met in the search for knowledge; Hegel’s absolute idealism is the antithesis – he provides important elements of a successful response to Kant, but on other counts falls short; and Steiner’s anthroposophy provides the synthesis.

Before a more detailed outline of this book’s structure is presented, a bit of historical context should be added. Why, first, is an *odyssey* of the self being considered? A general thesis which accompanies the argument is that the history of modern, and from Kant until Heidegger particularly German, philosophy can be seen as reflecting a series of stages in the gradual incarnation of a modern self. It is an incarnation because this self begins its journey, in the early-modern period, as a thinking substance separated from extended matter. From this point it is conceived in

an ever closer relationship to the body and the world – in a development including Kant, the German Idealists and Nietzsche and in important senses culminating, as will be argued, in Steiner. This gradual incarnation can be called an odyssey because in its philosophical expression it is a catalogue of some of the most ambitious and daring of the modern adventures of reason, in which many a passage between Scylla and Charybdis – most importantly the subject-object divide – is navigated. The main stages of this incarnation and odyssey, of which this book considers four (three in more detail), can be stated as follows:

- (i) The birth of the self or *cogito* in Descartes was a birth accompanied by the loss of the Aristotelian view of nature as a single, teleologically ordered whole in which man occupies only one significant stage on a ladder of being reaching from the four elements up to God. All that is certain to the Cartesian ego is its own thinking activity, and it is from here and not from ostensible truths of faith and religious revelation that its search for knowledge begins. (It is thus perhaps fair to say that modern thought begins with the divorce of reason from faith.) Since it finds certainty only within its own activity, the modern ego must doubt its relation to the outer world. As a result it experiences in a new form a whole series of dualisms: between inner and outer, mind and matter, soul and body, man and God...etc.⁴ Descartes' metaphysics, for example, distinguishes three kinds of substance: thinking, extended and God. Because the first two of these in particular are conceived as substantially irreconcilable, it is impossible for Descartes – as for other thinkers of this period including Spinoza and Leibniz – to give a coherent conception of their relation.⁵
- (ii) Whereas in Descartes the self hovers in a non-extended sphere distinct from the three-dimensional physical body, in Kant every notion we have of such a body already has the creative activity of thought woven into it. So whereas self and world or mind and body are linked only very tenuously (i.e. via the pineal gland) in Descartes, in Kant they become intimately interwoven. The conception I have of my body and the material world is saturated at every point with the activity of thought and has the unity of consciousness given by the self or 'I think' as its precondition. The object in general becomes inconceivable without the transcendental subject in whose unity it has its ground. Although Kant brings self and world into a much closer alliance than did Descartes, he does so at the expense of a scepticism about ontology. We can know only the world given to us via our cognitive faculties, not the world as it really is. Most importantly for Kant, we cannot know the three main objects of the search for knowledge: the self, the world and God, which must hence remain mere regulative ideas of reason.
- (iii) From Fichte, Schelling and Hegel we see the attempt to overcome Kant's scepticism and to conceive an absolute unity of self, the world and God. In Fichte the self is posited as the creator of the world – as the I which out of itself posits an opposition of I and not-I. The I is thus held to create the opposition of spirit and sense, though Fichte was unable to give this idea a sufficiently immanent expression. In the early Schelling spirit's immanence in nature – for him 'crystallized spirit' – and the intuitiveness of the absolute's self-disclosure are emphasized, whilst Hegel attempted to conceive the self in its absolute imma-

nence – i.e. in spirit as the synthesis of the idea and nature. Although, it will be argued, he fails to do this, Hegel nonetheless advances the process of the modern self's incarnation in several crucial directions: a) by giving it a historical and social self-understanding; b) by considering its evolution developmentally, and most impressively c) in his *Science of Logic*, in which he makes a spectacular attempt to lay out a basic logic of reality as an immanent self-critique by thought of its most basic categories. Lacking above all in the thought of the German Idealists, however, is a coherent concept of the physical body, and this is a shortcoming which many of their successors attempt to make good.

- (iv) In Schopenhauer and Nietzsche we see a further attempt to consider the self in its immanence. In Schopenhauer this takes the form of an inversion of the position this self had in German – and particularly Hegelian – Idealism. In emphasizing the will, Schopenhauer can be seen as attempting to counteract the one-sidedness of the self discovered primarily in the sphere of thought and conscious action by the Idealists – though as a metaphysician Schopenhauer is weaker than his Idealist predecessors. In Nietzsche we arrive at a more powerful conception of the self as an unknown or unconscious transcendental body, which creates both spirit and sense – including man's fragile conscious ego or the 'I think' – as instruments of its will. The modern self is here incarnated one step further, now being firmly rooted in a body – albeit not the body of our experience, but a 'mighty commander, an unknown sage', the seat of a hidden intelligence far greater than that of the human ego. (This is discussed in some detail in chapter 7.)
- (v) The transition from Nietzsche to Steiner sees a vision of the self advanced in which its ultimate unity with the physical body is presented in great ontological detail. (The physical body is thus seen as the outer form of an inner reality.) This vision describes how the material world evolved step-by-step from a spiritual one, and how in the future spirit and matter might be fully reunited. Steiner can thus be seen as fulfilling the ideal of the post-Kantian Idealists and of Romantic thought in general. He also deepens Nietzsche's notion that the self is the body, by showing how this body is constituted ontologically from levels of being which lie beyond the boundaries of ordinary consciousness in realms populated by forces and entities unknown to conventional natural science. Steiner's vision of this self's incarnation is completed in his Christology, in which he attempts to show what the event of Christ's crucifixion and then subsequent resurrection means for our understanding of humanity as a whole. In its final state the self's incarnation is, for Steiner, simultaneously its resurrection. Since for mankind as a whole this end lies a long way in the future – i.e. it is a mere evolutionary possibility – the self which realizes it is still very much transcendent.⁶
- (vi) Twentieth century philosophy saw the death or loss of the concept of self. This is reflected both in the writings of its major thinkers – Wittgenstein and Heidegger being the most important⁷ – and in the more recent division between so-called continental or post-modernist thought and the analytical tradition, in both of which the concept of self as some kind of Copernican centre of a vision of the world (or even as a non-conscious centre like Nietzsche's body) has disappeared, to be replaced by a fragmented and very much displaced subjectivity – by a self-understanding submerged in confusion and lack of spiritual

direction. This loss has been accompanied by increasing attention to detail in the search for knowledge, and by the specialization – in the natural sciences in particular – which has resulted from this. It can be argued that because of the tremendous successes of the sciences in the twentieth century, philosophy (and much in the humanities as a whole) has in many ways been more reactive than creative, since its attempts to find a place for the spiritual or a self-justification of the world of thought in the face of the materialism of natural science, have been very weak and unsuccessful.⁸

- (vii) The positive result of the death of self in much twentieth century thought is that – at a broader cultural level – a new conception of the self, a new human self-understanding is now starting to emerge. This is of a self returning to itself from the abysses of nihilism and other forms of self-alienation which have marked so much twentieth century thought – and which continue to be widespread in different forms in the academy in particular. This self is beginning to awaken above all to a more immediate experience of the reality of a spiritual world. Though this is reflected in many contemporary authors (see the following footnote), it still awaits a full, rigorous philosophical expression. Ideally this would be one which is positively enriched by the findings of the natural sciences, not lost in an attitude of servility towards them – as is much analytical philosophy – or in a frustrated and largely impotent dismissal of their claims to knowledge of truth – as is reflected in much post-modern thought, in which scientific discourse is often seen as having no more than narrative status.⁹

This brief sketch of the modern self's odyssey of incarnation in the direction of both an experience of greater immanence and a richer sense of the spiritual aspect of reality must suffice for now. In this book I focus on central aspects of stages (ii) to (v), from which a single, unified argument is developed.

Why, then, Kant and Hegel? My aim is to conceive a synthesis of transcendentalism and dialectic: to demonstrate the need to discover ontological conditions of the possibility of experience whose internal logic conforms to the discoveries of the dialectical method. Kant and Hegel serve this purpose better than any other thinkers since they still represent the two strongest attempts to consider thinking and its possibilities in the conventional language of philosophy – i.e. the language which works with such terms as the concept, substance, thinking, perceiving, being, essence etc. (A different kind of language will be considered when Steiner is reached.) So what, first, are transcendentalism and dialectic?

In Kant the concept of the transcendental refers to necessary constitutive conditions of experience. The capacity to apply concepts which play an ordering function in our experience – such as the concept of unity – is an example of such a condition. It is necessary that we have such concepts, since without them our experience could not be an experience of an ordered world, and they are constitutive of our experience in that they are always immediately applied in it. Transcendental conditions of experience are, for Kant, to be distinguished from empirical ones. The eye researched by the biologist trying to understand vision, for example, is an empirical condition of experience because any account of it presupposes its transcendental conditions – i.e. my being able to form concepts and to perceive. Unless it can be shown that an eye is a necessary condition of vision (which would require, for Kant, knowledge of the mind-body

relation – i.e. of how the capacity to perceive is causally related to our sense organs –, which he thought impossible), it cannot be considered a transcendental condition, but must remain the object of a cognitive act (specifically that in which concepts and intuitions are united) in which these transcendental conditions are applied.¹⁰ This has the consequence for natural science that it can at best describe correlations between physical events as it understands these and the events of consciousness which accompany and, from the epistemological perspective, of course presuppose them.

Constitutive transcendental conditions are hence necessary conditions of experience which are applied in the processes which lead to these experiences. Kant gives his account of how these conditions are applied through his conception of man's four basic representational capacities: a) the understanding – which provides the intelligible conditions of experience, b) sensibility – which provides sensory conditions of experience, c) the imagination, whose main purpose is to unite the understanding and sensibility, and d) reason – which considers and orders the rules of the understanding, and which has philosophy as its highest form. It is hence the imagination which applies the constitutive conditions of experience to the sensory manifold presented by sensibility, but it is in the understanding that these conditions have their seat. Kant's conception will not be discussed any further here, since this is the purpose of the first chapter. However, the basic conclusion of Kant's position is quite straightforward: in the search for self-knowledge man reaches a boundary in the notions of the cognitive faculty and the representation. Awareness of this boundary is the price, for Kant, of being able to state transcendental conditions of experience, and its existence means that we cannot truly know our knowing.¹¹

In general it might be said that the most important distinction in any transcendentalism is that between thinking act and thinking content. To emphasize the act of thought is to focus on thought's processual character (i.e. thinking, imagining etc.), whereas to emphasize its content or result is to concentrate on that in which this process comes to rest (i.e. the concept, the percept etc.). For Kant it is in the (blind) process of thought (and particularly the synthesis performed by the imagination) that the transcendental conditions of knowledge are applied, and in its result that we have ordinary experience.¹²

Turning, then, to dialectic. Dialectic as practised by Hegel is supposed to overcome the limits of Kant's transcendental scepticism in two main ways:

- 1 It shows how the contradictions which Kant thought intrinsic to the exercise of reason can be overcome. Hegel demonstrates that basic philosophical categories have an internal relation to their opposites (e.g. the subject to the object), into which they pass in the process of being thought, such that in the passage from the one to the other the initial category is retained (e.g. the subject is in the object) but in a contradictory form which then demands resolution (e.g. the unity of subject and object). (An initial determination of thought is thus negated in the movement of dialectic, and this negation is itself negated in the reconstitution of a unity – this Hegel calls the speculative moment of thought.¹³) This conception of the dialectical method is supposed to show how the form of the thinking act as process (as the movement from one concept to another) reappears in its content – i.e. as an identity which maintains itself in its differences (e.g. the concept of the subject which maintains itself in that of the object).¹⁴

- 2 Hegel uses the dialectical method to argue, at least implicitly, that the ultimate condition of the possibility of experience is thought's thinking itself – i.e. that when the absolute idea as subject has itself for its object, it – in thinking the absolute form of reality – actively constitutes the ground of all being.

It will be argued that the second of these attempts to use dialectic to the end of achieving absolute knowledge falls short of a successful overcoming of Kantian scepticism, and that Hegel does not therefore in the end provide more than a philosophical logic for understanding how human experience is constituted transcendently. Specifically, I shall argue that in failing to recognize the need to apply dialectic more directly to the thought-sense relation and to the process of imaginative synthesis, in a direct attempt to overcome Kant's ontological scepticism, Hegel ended up defending an ultimately contradictory metaphysics which cannot escape the charge of being a one-sided idealism. Hegel said of Kant that his is a "complete philosophy of the Understanding, which renounces Reason."¹⁵ I claim that Hegel's own comes close to being a complete philosophy of reason, but that – in being insufficiently transcendental – it renounces sensibility. This means that Hegel gets no closer than Kant to answering such questions as how transcendently constituted objects of experience such as sense organs are themselves related to the faculties to which, in Kant's language, they owe their existence in a human world. (He can thus tell us neither what the synthesis of the imagination nor what the ground of our cognitive faculties – and specifically sensibility – is, let alone how we are to understand the mind-body relation, as will be argued.)

What is important for the purposes of this book about the method of dialectic, however, is that it provides a means of demonstrating the need to conceive a possible overcoming of the dualisms of thought and experience – most notably the characteristically modern one of self and world or subject and object. I shall attempt to demonstrate that if Hegel's dialectic is applied with a bit more consistency than he himself applied it, then it can help us to see how this overcoming might be achieved.

In opposition to Kant, then, Hegel argues that the categories which we apply constitutively in our experience are categories which have a dialectical logic embedded within them, one which promises an overcoming of the opposition of subject and object which – in the form of the thought-sense opposition – remains rigid in Kant. Against Hegel, however, it can simply be pointed out that no matter what dialectical logic discovers, for our actual experience this Kantian opposition is actually not overcome at all. Owing to the givenness of our percepts the objects of the perceived world (i.e. of the world constituted by sensibility and the understanding) remain objects unassimilated to subjectivity – in everything but philosophical logic. What I shall argue, in other words, is that to apply Hegel's death-and-resurrection logic of thought to the empirical world, Kant's faculty-scepticism first has to be overcome and such questions as that of the mind-body relation resolved. The one thinker who has come close to making this possible, via his esoterically extended conception of man and the world, is Steiner.

How, then, does Steiner synthesize transcendentalism and dialectic? Put most simply, he does so by presenting an ontological conception of the conditions of the possibility of experience and knowledge which is (at least implicitly) framed by the logical constraints of dialectic. He thus:

- (i) Overcomes Kant's language of epistemologically conceived faculties, replacing it with a thorough-going ontology. In doing so he introduces a considerably modified version of the four-fold anthropological ontology which Aristotle presents in his *De Anima* (where he distinguishes the physical body, and vegetative, sensitive and intellectual souls). It is this ontology which Steiner uses to argue, against Kant, that the thing-in-itself can be known, and, against Hegel, that such knowledge transcends the highest possibilities of reason. (According to Steiner, embodied experience of the sensory world, for example, can only be explained by an account which is able to show how the physical, etheric and astral bodies and the self – Steiner's correlates of Aristotle's ontology – interact when such experience takes place.¹⁶)
- (ii) Steiner embodies Hegel's processual logic in this ontology, which means that he conceives humanity at its current stage of evolution in relation to a possible end of history. This evolution and its end are themselves both given expression by him in the language of the interaction between the levels of being he considers.

In keeping with a dialectically motivated monism, Steiner does not conceive his ontology as simply another list of faculties which come together to produce experience. He instead embeds his account in an evolutionary conception of the cosmos and of man, in which is stated in some detail how the differentiation of the levels of being he considers came about, as well as how his different faculties might one day be both radically transformed and unified.¹⁷ How, it might be asked, did Steiner have cognitive access to the regions of being he describes? Steiner claims that such access is through the awakening of organs of cognition – which Plato when describing what happens to one who has a vision of beauty in the mysteries calls 'wings of the soul'¹⁸ – which in most human beings lie dormant, and which have their seat in the more refined levels of being Steiner distinguishes.¹⁹ (What is important for present purposes is not whether Steiner actually had access to the regions of being he describes, but that the existence of such regions is – as I shall argue – anyway a necessary condition of the ordinary embodied state. Steiner's observations are thus rendered plausible for the non-clairvoyant by being seen to fulfil quite straightforward demands upon the search for conditions of the possibility of experience.)

For Steiner it is thus important that in the embodied state we already inhabit the different regions of being which he describes.²⁰ The challenge on the path of self-knowledge is then to bring awareness of these regions into waking consciousness, so that those processes which now act as Kant puts it 'blindly' in constituting our experience can become objects of knowledge; so that, in short, we might properly know our knowing.²¹

The most complete form of the answer Steiner gives to the question of the self-world relation is in his Christology and particularly in his conception of resurrection. I will not discuss the many details of this Christology, since my present interest is in seeing how it can help to integrate transcendentalism and dialectic purely philosophically. It will, however, form part of the background to the defence of my concluding thesis. This is that *the possibility of the resurrection of a physical body and the physical world in general, understood as the attainment of a fully-mediated synthesis of subject and object, is a necessary condition of ordinary thought and experience*. It is the articulation of this possibility that transforms metaphysics into Christology.

A brief outline of the structure of this book may now be given. As already mentioned, the focus is on the thought of Hegel; a discussion of that thought and its shortcomings consequently takes up the central chapters. In chapter 1 Kant's conception of cognitive faculties and representations is considered. I argue that this conception needs to be extended in two directions: that followed by Hegel and other post-Kantian Idealists, which represents an elaboration of his conceptions of the 'I think' and of the categories of the understanding in particular; and that of Heidegger and of phenomenology in general, which extends especially Kant's conceptions of the imagination and of time and space, the pure forms of intuition. These two extensions might loosely be called the rationalist and the descriptive extensions of transcendental idealism. My emphasis will be on the first, though in the discussion of Steiner the second will also come into play. The discussion of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and Kant's critical metaphysics is supplemented by a consideration of his less well-known and non-critical views about the soul-body relation, as found in his 'Lectures on Rational Psychology'. Here Kant reveals a Platonism or two-world metaphysics in his argument that the soul will know reality only after death, when it has left the physical body behind. Although the arguments Kant advances in defence of these views do not fall within the critical system, they can help us to understand some of its most important features. I will use them to argue that Kant attempted to limit reason not only to make room for faith and to rescue natural science from Humean scepticism, but also to make room for a rich life of the soul after death.

In chapter 2 certain aspects of Hegel's implicit critique of Kant are considered, as found in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I emphasize the connection between Hegel's processual logic and Kant's conception of teleology in the *Critique of Judgement*. The main conclusion of this section is that Hegel provides a successful critique of Kant's conception of the object in so far as he demonstrates that the object's unity as an object must be intrinsic to it, but that in the *Phenomenology* he fails to address the crucial question of the ontological status and transcendental ground of our sensory intuitions. These intuitions retain a givenness or externality which at no point in Hegel's argument is overcome. Here for the first time the central thesis of this book concerning the Kant-Hegel relation is introduced, which is that Hegel failed to appreciate the full force of Kant's scepticism about ontology and particularly about our ability to know the origin of our sensory intuitions. This criticism will be made on two further occasions: a) when the third book of Hegel's *Science of Logic* is considered, and b) in the discussion of Hegel's anthropology.

The Kant-Hegel discussion is continued in chapter 3, which considers: a) the nature of Hegelian logic, b) Hegel's conception of the logic of the self and c) his conceptions of the concept, the judgement and the syllogism. In a) the main aim is to understand what Hegel means by 'logic' – how in particular he attempts to transform Kant's transcendental logic (i.e. the metaphysical logic of the first *Critique*) into a speculative or dialectical logic – and why he thought that conventional logic, metaphysics and ontology converge in this loftiest of all philosophical disciplines. The idea of a Christo-logic is also introduced in this discussion. Transcendental and speculative logic have a common foundation in a logic of subjectivity, and in b) I consider both the logic of the self presented by Hegel in the discussion of cognition in the *Logic*'s third book, the *Logic of the Concept*, and the discussion of the concept in its subjectivity which comprises the first part of this book. Here I argue that Hegel's

conception of the absolute subject, the I, occupies an ambiguous and unsatisfactory position in his argument. In c) the relation of Hegel's conception of the self to the Subjectivity section proper of the *Logic of the Concept* is considered.

Chapters 4 and 5 consider the 'Objectivity' and the 'Idea' sections of the *Logic of the Concept* respectively. Here three main related theses are defended:

- (i) That there is an unresolved tension in the logic-ontology relation in the *Logic*, which manifests in both the Objectivity and the Idea sections of the '*Logic of the Concept*' and has two main sources: a) Hegel's failure to recognize ontological implications of his logic of life, and b) his incoherent conception of sensibility in the *Logic*. Sensibility, it will be argued, should have played a more important role than it does in his conception of subjectivity and the subject-object relation.
- (ii) That the order in which Hegel develops his categories in both the Objectivity and the Idea sections of his argument ceases to be dialectical. The categories of teleology, life and cognition are criticized on this account.
- (iii) That Hegel's *Logic* issues in a series of antinomies or unresolved contradictions, owing ultimately to his inability to translate the language of this *Logic* into that of an ontology able to meet the *Logic's* demands. These antinomies are presented in the form of a series of basic questions which Hegel should on his own terms have been able to answer but ultimately cannot.

Most importantly, I argue that the under-determination of logic by ontology in the *Logic* manifests in an unresolved tension surrounding the question of the self's absolute and eternal status. It will be demonstrated that Hegel should have considered this self to be eternal in the full sense – and so, as an absolute subject, ultimately transcendent – but that, owing in the end once again to his insufficiently rich conception of being, he does not state this conclusion unambiguously.

Chapter 6 considers Hegel's conception of the soul as the mediator between body and spirit. Here further evidence is provided for the defence of the thesis that Hegel's thought suffers serious ontological shortcomings. However, in Hegel's anthropology will also be found the seeds of ideas, particularly in his discussion of clairvoyance and animal magnetism, which can show how these ontological limitations might be overcome. My reading of Hegel's anthropology will interpret it as in many ways the outer boundary of his system, and as that part of this system in which its most basic unresolved contradictions come to the fore. This is most obvious in Hegel's failure to offer an adequate conception of the mind-body relation. Here I will argue, again, that Hegel does not respond satisfactorily to the reasons Kant gave for thinking that this relation could not be known.

The discussion of both Kant and Hegel demonstrates that the phenomena of clairvoyance or esoteric phenomena represent an important boundary in their respective systems. In the transition from Kant and Hegel to Steiner (chapter 7), it will be shown how this boundary is penetrated and how the phenomena of clairvoyance can become central to a metaphysical vision of the self and of the self-world relation. Before Steiner is discussed, Nietzsche's conception of the self as found in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is briefly considered, since it provides an ideal link between Kant and Hegel, and Steiner. The discussion of Steiner is more than anything introductory and serves to show how his thought responds to the unresolved tension between Kant's

ontologically sceptical transcendentalism and Hegel's ontologically under-determined dialectic. As already mentioned, it is with the help of Steiner's conception of resurrection that the odyssey of the self presented in this book comes to its end.²²

Notes

- 1 F.W. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra. A Book for Everyone and No One*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969 [1961]), 'Of the Afterworldsmen', p. 59.
- 2 The word 'metaphysics' is used relatively loosely here and includes philosophical psychology and philosophical anthropology.
- 3 The reasons for this will be considered later. See especially footnote 26, chapter 7.
- 4 A symptom of this experience – still widespread today in scientific thinking and philosophy influenced by it – is Galileo's distinction between primary and secondary qualities (i.e. between such qualities as mass, size, shape... and colour, smell, taste...), the first of which are held to exist in the object, the second to be the result of the presence of the perceiving subject. (This distinction is criticized initially by Berkeley and then most decisively rejected by Kant.)
- 5 Although Descartes tries to overcome his scepticism about the possibility of knowledge of the outside world, he clearly fails in this as is demonstrated by such Empiricists as Hume and then Kant who apply the scepticism with which the mind-matter dualism is naturally graced with proper consistency.
- 6 How and why this is the case Steiner attempts to explain in detail in his many writings and lectures on the subject.
- 7 The transition from the early to the late Wittgenstein sees an initially central transcendental subject ('I am my world' (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922), proposition 5.63) disappear to be replaced by a more fluidly conceived and communal transcendentalism of rule-following linguistic behaviour. In Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1962) the subject-object dualism of the Cartesian tradition is criticized and replaced with a purely descriptive or phenomenological account of human selfhood. Such questions as the nature of the man-world, mind-body or man-God relation are no longer considered in the language of any kind of philosophical logic or rationalism.
- 8 Many have thought that philosophy should become a servant of the natural sciences or, like Wittgenstein, that its questions should be held apart from those of science. However, they have often done so at the expense of no longer asking the questions proper to philosophy as a discipline.
- 9 Contemporary authors who give expression to a newly discovered spiritual understanding of human nature can be grouped under several main headings: a) those inspired by the findings of depth psychology – these include such figures as S. Grof, James Hillman and P. Sloterdijk, b) those intent on reinvigorating the natural and medical sciences with non-materialistic ideas – including W. Schad, R. Sheldrake, A. Zajonc, and c) those who, following Steiner, have attempted to breathe a fresh life into Christianity – including J. Ben-Aharon, R. Leviton and S. Prokoffief.
- 10 How exactly such conditions are known and applied will be considered in chapter 1.
- 11 Kant's faculties do not have the status of substances, like Descartes' 'soul' or 'extended matter'. The word 'faculty' is thus merely a general term used to name a set of phenomenologically and functionally distinct representational capacities whose derived epistemological status (i.e. they are not any kind of absolute ground of human nature) entails that they must be considered the products of a more fundamental, though for Kant

unknowable, reality. Kant thus says that 'human insight is at an end as soon as we arrive at fundamental powers or faculties, for their possibility can in no way be understood and should not be just arbitrarily imagined or assumed' (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), A81, p. 41; *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften (*Akademie-Ausgabe*, henceforth AA) (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1997 [1902]), V., p. 46.). Steiner attempts to show that these powers can be understood without being arbitrarily imagined or assumed.

- 12 Two prominent twentieth century examples of transcendental thinkers are Wittgenstein and Heidegger. For Wittgenstein it is through actual language use that transcendental conditions of meaning – i.e. rules of usage – are constituted. Wittgenstein thus insists upon considering the act and the content of thought as inter-dependent. It is not as though we apply a rule abstractly to a set of data. Rather the rule itself is constituted through the act of using language. (Wittgenstein's thought is not conceptually advanced enough for one to be able consider his transcendental conditions of meaning as necessary.) For Heidegger, the phenomenological method is applied to illuminate the transcendental (though not necessary) conditions of everyday existence. For a discussion of Wittgenstein and Heidegger as neo-Kantians see R. Mandel's 'Heidegger and Wittgenstein: A second Kantian Revolution', in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, ed. M. Murray (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978).
- 13 Hegel here really presents a conception of the process of thought as the enaction of a death and resurrection logic. The negativity of thought – its restless movement from one determination to the next – represents the moment of death, in that it sees the indeterminate subject of the thinking act, 'the energy of thought, of the pure I' (*Phenomenology of Spirit*), die into a specific determination. In this act of dying, however, the I also has its life, but only in so far as it is able to return to itself as subject (as a negation of the negation or of death) in its unity with its negative self-determination. I will argue that Hegel fails to give this logic of death and resurrection full ontological immanence, and that the thought of Steiner can help to show how this might be done.
- 14 A thinking act which immediately has itself for its content such as Aristotle's noesis noeseos – i.e. the unmoved mover or self-thinking thought – would never know the death of negation which characterizes Hegel's conception of thought. That Hegel should nonetheless have considered an absolute, transcendent self will be argued in chapters 3 to 5.
- 15 G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996), p. 627; *Werke*, eds. E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970 (new edition 1986), vol. 20, p. 385; *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. H. Glockner (Stuttgart: F. Frommann Verlag (G. Holzboog), 1927–1930), vol. 19, p. 610.
- 16 One of the most important questions left unanswered in Kant is how the objects of our knowledge are related to the faculties which make it possible for us to experience and describe them – and specifically how the faculty of sensibility, which gives us every notion we have of the material world, is related to this material world itself. Steiner attempts to answer this and many questions related to it in the language of his expanded vision of being.
- 17 The main regions Steiner distinguishes, following the Theosophists in his terminology, are the etheric, astral (or soul) and spiritual worlds. The geography of these worlds is, according to Steiner, as rich and complex as that of the physical world. (See his lectures entitled 'Die Seelenwelt' – Berlin 10.11.1904, and 'Das Geisterland' – 17.11.1904, published in a lecture series under the title *Theosophie* – volume 53 of his collected works.) Such regions are, of course, familiar in many different literatures. Thus ancient Greek thought distinguished *Tartarus* (which is described in detail by Plato in the *Phaedo*) from *Elysium*, just as esoteric Buddhism distinguishes *Kamaloka* from

- Devachan* [literally, the dwelling of the gods], and Christianity e.g. purgatory from heaven. In keeping with his aim to conceive a spiritual science, Steiner's accounts reach a level of detail of expression not hitherto envisaged in the Western tradition.
- 18 *Phaedrus* 250e – 252b.
- 19 Their awakening is itself accounted for in terms of structural changes wrought upon the human organization by a path of cognitive development – either one which occurs spontaneously, or due to a specific training.
- 20 Kant also claimed that the soul's passage into the spiritual world after death is not a change of place, but a change of state – i.e. a passage from one in which we experience physical perceptions to one where we experience the nature of spiritual reality. In his 'Vorlesungen über rationale Psychologie' he thus says 'the other world [i.e. the world into which the soul passes after death] is not another place, but another [a spiritual] perception' (p. 254, following Pöhlitz's text (reproduced in AA, vol. XXVIII.1, p.298). I mention Kant at this point to show that Steiner's thought is not as alien to that of German Idealism as one might think. Kant's esoteric ideas will be discussed in chapter 1.
- 21 Plato talked about the river of *Lethe* into which our souls are dipped before we reincarnate. This dipping causes us to forget our experiences of previous lives and of the spiritual world (see the myth of Er in his *Republic* X, 621c). Steiner interprets the river of forgetfulness as that state of the human organization which shuts out consciousness of many aspects of the spiritual world so that the attainment of certain ends – in the long run, human freedom – might be made possible. (This state of the human organization is a specific condition of the three bodies (physical, etheric, astral) and of the self.) For Steiner and other occultists, we cross this river every morning upon waking. A beautiful modern allegory that takes up the Lethe-image and interprets it along the lines just indicated is Goethe's *Fairytale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*. (Goethe's fairy tale is partially inspired by Egyptian religion – in which this river separating the mundane from the spiritual takes the name of the 'veil of Isis', as has been beautifully demonstrated by Alice Raphael in her book *Goethe and the Philosopher's Stone* (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1965).)
- 22 For a table which outlines the basic framework of ideas within which this discussion unfolds, see Appendix 1.

Chapter 1

Kant's Faculties and the 'I think'

Kant conceived of ordinary human experience as unfolding in a cognitive region where the intelligible and the sensible are encountered as a richly structured unity. One of the main tasks of reason is to ask how this unity – i.e. human experience – is possible. In brief Kant's answer is that human beings are gifted with a set of cognitive faculties which issue in representations. These faculties can combine in different ways to produce a variety of kinds of representation – the different forms of human experience. The challenge of this chapter is to consider the nature of the faculties, how they combine, their relation to the transcendental subject (the ground of the understanding) and the shortcomings of Kant's account.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the result of Kant's consideration of the processes of cognition as the machinations of faculties and representations is a profound scepticism about the claims of ontology. Thus whereas Descartes saw experience as the result of an interaction between three distinct *substances* – mind, body and the extended world – transcendental idealism allows only talk of *faculties*. Concepts like 'soul' and 'God' are, for Kant, nothing but regulative ideas of reason whose purpose is to stand as the unattainable ends of reason; mere ideas in a land of thought where the child of epistemology, the representation, reigns supreme.

For Kant we thus begin by asking how experience is possible. This leads us to identify a set of necessary conditions that make it possible, which Kant calls transcendental conditions. Our experience of objects, for example, must be of objects experienced in space and time; these objects must be experienced as a unity of properties related to one another under a subject term – e.g. all the properties of a plant are *of* [i.e. are related to] *a* [a single] plant.... Space, time and categories such as unity and relation are thus all necessary conditions of the possibility of our experience, and they are conditions which are met by the harmonious interaction of our cognitive faculties.

The idea of a faculty responds to the need to provide a unifying subject term for specific classes of representations. The representations of each class have their conditions. Of these there are – as has been stated – two kinds: conceptual (or intelligible) and sensible conditions. Kant correspondingly distinguishes a faculty of understanding, which provides the *a priori* conceptual conditions of experience, from a faculty of sensibility, through which we are given *a priori* and *a posteriori* sensible conditions of experience – i.e. space, time (which for Kant are *a priori*), and immediate sensory impressions (colours, sounds, smells...). To these are added two further faculties, reason and the imagination. Reason is introduced to account for the conditions of reflective experiences – i.e. for such activities as philosophical thinking, while the imagination is the faculty that unifies the conceptual and sensible conditions of experience, and so is in some ways both a sensible and a conceptual faculty

(this will be discussed below). Its basic role is to perform certain kinds of cognitive synthesis.

In addition to these four faculties, Kant introduces the all-important concept of the 'I think that must be capable of accompanying every representation'. This thinking self is, strictly speaking, a feature of the understanding, though Kant sometimes calls it a faculty, and it is also intimately related to both the imagination and reason.¹ Although a precise interpretation of Kant's conception opens up many different avenues for considering the nature of the 'I think', as will be seen, its basic function is to give formal unity to consciousness: it is the self-consciousness that is a necessary condition of thought and experience.

At the most basic level, then, Kant's philosophy deals with relations among the faculties and with the different kinds of representation that arise both through each faculty and as a result of their relations to one another. How, then, does Kant conceive the faculties?

1.1 The Faculties of Cognition

Sensibility

The faculty of sensibility provides two forms of representation for Kant, pure and empirical intuitions. Pure intuitions give the forms of sensibility, which are space and time. Empirical intuitions are its matter and these are given via the senses. Kant defines sensibility in general as 'the capacity (receptivity) to acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects...'.² The form of our intuitions is given *a priori*, since Kant conceives space and time as non-empirical conditions of the possibility of representing empirical objects. Yet space and time are not conceptual or intelligible conditions of the experience of objects for Kant, since he conceives them to be immediately given rather than the products of spontaneous activity. Space and time thus occupy a mediating position between purely intelligible conditions of experience which are also *a priori* and *a posteriori* empirical ones.

Sensation is defined by Kant as 'the effect of an object on the capacity for representation, in so far as we are affected by that object'.³ The effect an object (or rather the unknowable ground of sensibility) has on our sensibility when considered in its purely sensory constitution, can be determined *a priori* for Kant in only one respect: through what he calls intensive magnitude. A sound's being loud or soft, a colour's brightness or dullness are examples of intensive magnitudes of sensation. The range that determines such magnitudes begins at nothingness (e.g. silence) and passes with infinitely many possible variants up to an arbitrary upper limit – presumably reached with the destruction of the sense organ through excess stimulation in its own sensory medium. Kant distinguishes intensive from extensive magnitudes, which always involve aggregates of parts – for example a row of points forming a line in space – and so involve the pure forms of intuition (i.e. space and time). If I see a red flower, I have already united intensive and extensive magnitudes, and so *a priori* and *a posteriori* intuitions.

Hence all that can be said *a priori* about the *a posteriori*, for Kant, is that it always has an intensive magnitude. All other kinds of statement about sensations – e.g. that

they are related to sense organs – are *a posteriori*.⁴ Aside from distinguishing pure from sensible or empirical intuitions, and analysing the relations between them in cognition, there is very little else Kant can say from the critical perspective about sensibility, since as shown above he has no means of providing a unified conception of the transcendental and empirical conditions of experience, and only the former have any fundamental philosophical validity. We are hence in no sense allowed to make claims about what causes sensibility. It must be accepted as a given.

Understanding

The understanding is without question the dominant faculty of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, since Kant's analysis of it both shows it to provide the *a priori* conditions that make our experiences intelligible and ordered, and gives Kant his reasons for limiting the powers of reason. In this brief outline of it the aim is to present a summary version of the argument of Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories, in which the role of the understanding in our cognition is described. This will prepare us to consider in more detail that crucial function of the understanding which Kant calls the transcendental unity of apperception or the 'pure, original, unchanging consciousness',⁵ the 'I think' that must be able to accompany every representation.

Kant's conception of the understanding involves several important concepts. They and the relations between them can be described as follows:

- (i) The understanding provides intelligible conditions of experience. (Kant thus says that the understanding is '...the faculty for bringing forth representations of objects, or the spontaneity of cognition...'.⁶)
- (ii) Experience always takes the form of a judgement. (E.g. as when I express the sentiment 'this is a magical sunset'.)
- (iii) Judgement involves the application of categories. (Embedded in a simple categorical judgement like 'the flower is blooming', for example, are – amongst others – the categories of substance [the flower], unity [it is *a* flower] and relation [the flower *is* blooming].) Judgements come in different forms and are related to different categories – e.g. the judgement 'all men are rational animals' contains the category of necessity in it.
- (iv) Categories are 'pure [*ursprünglich*] concepts of synthesis that the understanding contains in it *a priori*'.⁷ (Thus in the previous example, the implicit category of unity serves to synthesize the manifold of perceptions in a single substance.)
- (v) The ground of the categories is the transcendental subject or the 'I think that must be able to accompany every representation'. This subject is 'that unity through which all of the manifold given in an intuition is united in a concept of the object'.⁸ Without the transcendental subject there could thus be no notion of an object and so, *a priori*, no categories, since the categories are predicates of the concept of the object in general.⁹ (That is: they are the necessary concepts required to give coherence to the notion of an object. The notion of an object itself has content only through the transcendental unity of apperception – i.e. through that which is able to confer unity upon a sensory manifold, so constituting *an* object.)

- (vi) In so far as the 'I think' is the ground of the understanding, then, it can be said that it is the ultimate origin of the unity and intelligibility that experience acquires through being formed in accordance with the categories and the different forms of judgement. (Kant thus says about a judgement that it is 'nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the objective unity of apprehension'.¹⁰)

For the purposes of this book the most contentious and important aspects of Kant's conception of the understanding involve its use to explain the relation of the transcendental subject to the categories; this and the question of the understanding's relation to the imagination. Before these are discussed in more detail, however, Kant's other faculties will briefly be introduced.

Imagination

Kant introduces the concept of the imagination by saying that it is the cause in general of synthesis, and that it is 'a blind though indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no cognition at all, but of which we are seldom even conscious'.¹¹ Synthesis itself he defines as 'the action of putting different representations together and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition'.¹² The imagination synthesizes, therefore, and it does so in interaction with a manifold. In the A version of the 'transcendental deduction of the categories' Kant discusses the different forms of synthesis in considerable detail, the result being different but inter-related stages of the imaginative (or synthetic) process. In the B version his discussion of the imagination is much more limited, though he does there emphasize the role it plays of mediator between sensibility and the understanding.¹³

An important distinction needs to be made from the outset between the imagination as 'the faculty of representing an object even without its presence in intuition'¹⁴ (this is how Kant defines the imagination in the B deduction) and the imagination conceived transcendently. The latter sense of imagination is far more extensive and includes the act of synthesis that originally brings unity to bear on the sensory manifold of intuition. This apprehensive synthesis is a presupposition of the imagination that I exercise when I think about someone who is not present.

Kant distinguishes the following forms of synthesis in the A version of his 'transcendental deduction of the categories':

- 1 *Synthesis of apprehension in the intuition.*¹⁵ Kant also calls this a pure synthesis of apprehension. It refers to the *a priori* capacity to unify the immediately given sensory manifold. This capacity depends upon the mind's being able to detect a unity in the temporal unfolding of this manifold, so determining a single apprehension of the manifold in the present.
- 2 *Synthesis of reproduction in the imagination.*¹⁶ The synthesis of reproduction is introduced to account for the fact that grasping the unity of a sensory manifold means placing the different elements of a single thought in a temporal sequence. In order for this to be achieved, each prior element of a thought (i.e. each of the series of representations that comprises it) has to be preserved in the transition to the next one. If I imagine a line being joined with itself to form a circle, for example, my representation only succeeds if at each new stage I do not forget the

previous one. To explain why this does not happen Kant says we need to attribute to consciousness the ability to reproduce at each moment in the unfolding of a thought the stages that have preceded it; to retain the consciousness of the past in the present. (It is the reproductive imagination that determines patterns of psychological association – in which thoughts and images are related to one another as a matter of habit, e.g. a falling object to the sound it will make on impact...¹⁷)

- 3 *Synthesis of recognition in the concept.*¹⁸ The first two forms of synthesis respond to the need for transcendently constituted unity in the manifold a) in the immediate empirical present and b) through time in the form of the need to have the past preserved in the present. The third moment of synthesis brings us to the true ground of the unity that is implicit in all synthesis. This is the *concept*, which 'unifies the manifold that has been successively intuited, and then also reproduced, into one representation'. Kant calls this a synthesis of recognition because it constitutes the ground of the possibility of recognition. I recognize a flower as a flower only after I have formed a concept of the latter within empirical consciousness.

In so far as the concept is what gives unity to the manifold of intuitions which constitutes our experience of the object, it is the ground of the notion of the object in general. However, neither the concept (as the unity-giving principle) nor the notion of an object (whose unity is thought in relation to a manifold) can be the ground of the principle of unity as such; for the concepts and objects of consciousness both undergo change, whereas the transcendental ground of unity must be unchanging. (That is: such a ground must have the principle of unity intrinsic to it, since otherwise its unity will always be derived from something else *ad infinitum*... .) This ground is the above-introduced transcendental unity of apperception (in the B edition it becomes the 'I think...') which is a 'pure, original, unchanging consciousness',¹⁹ a 'necessary consciousness of the identity of oneself'²⁰ which is 'always one and the same'²¹ (i.e. numerically identical) and so able to be the true ground of the unity of consciousness.²²

It is through apperception, therefore, that the synthesis of the manifold is achieved, for apperception represents the appearances 'in the empirical consciousness of the identity of... reproductive representations with the appearances through which they were given, hence in recognition'.²³ Apperception thus unifies the first two moments of synthesis – apprehensive and reproductive – by providing the condition (the unity of the concept) that makes it possible for me to recognize my immediate sensory experience through the unity of different stages of a representation. In short it allows me to experience the appearances as a self-conscious being in relation to an object or through a concept.

Kant summarizes this when he begins the systematic exposition of the transcendental deduction at A115: 'Sense represents the appearances empirically in perception, the imagination [represents them] in association (and reproduction), and apperception [represents them] in the empirical consciousness of identity of these reproductive representations with the appearances through which they were given, hence in recognition.' Clearly many important questions remain to be asked about the imagination, in particular concerning its relation to the understanding. It has been shown that both fulfil important unifying functions for Kant, and that both are intimately related to the 'I think'. It thus remains to distinguish them carefully (which will involve a brief discussion of Kant's 'schematism') and to consider the

transcendental subject – which is in an important sense the ground of both – in more detail. Turning first, however, to Kant's fourth major faculty, reason.

Reason

Kant defines reason as 'the faculty of the unity of the rules of understanding under principles'.²⁴ It is thus exercised not on experience, but on the understanding. Kant begins his discussion of reason in the *Dialectic* by distinguishing a logical from a pure use of reason. The logical use of reason is its use in drawing inferences. Such inferences are formalized in the syllogism, in which a judgement expressing a specific condition (a minor premise such as 'Socrates is a man') is subsumed under a judgement expressing the condition of a universal rule (a major premise such as 'All men are mortal'), leading to a conclusion that represents the application of the rule to the subsumed judgement (e.g. 'Socrates is mortal'). The activity of deducing conclusions from premises via different forms of syllogism Kant calls the 'descending' function of reason. This he contrasts with an 'ascending' function which aims at discovering the unconditioned ground of conditioned (i.e. transcendently constituted) cognitions of the understanding.²⁵ This ascending function of reason is its pure use.

The concepts that reason produces in its search for the unconditioned are its own, though they are intimately related to the categories of the understanding. Kant calls them ideas of reason (or transcendental ideas), and they fall into three classes: a) 'the absolute (or unconditioned) unity of the thinking subject', b) 'the absolute unity of the series of conditions of appearance', and c) 'the absolute unity of the condition of all objects of thought in general'.²⁶ In ordinary language they form the leading ideas of rational psychology (the self), cosmology (the empirical world) and theology (God). Kant's main claim in the *Dialectic* concerning these ideas of reason is that unlike the pure concepts of the understanding they play a regulative rather than a constitutive role in man's thinking, standing as ideal and so subjective (rather than real and objective) ends of inquiry. The main ground of Kant's scepticism concerning the knowability of the ideas of reason is that they lack any correspondence to objects of experience – i.e. they are an outcome of the reflections of reason alone, and so lack any empirical ground in sensibility.²⁷

Reason's basic function is thus to give unity to knowledge. It is doomed to fail in this task, Kant thinks, since its use can only be regulative (that is: the unity it discovers has its ultimate origin in the transcendental unity of apperception of the understanding, not in an idea of reason itself). However, the regulative role that it plays is vital to the project of understanding the appearances, for it is reason in its regulative use that systematizes and unifies the discoveries of the understanding, providing us with, for example, the means of classifying entities into species, genera, families...etc. Neither a family, a genus nor a species actually exists in empirical reality – it is individuals that exist – but they are all nonetheless important regulative categories.

This completes the brief consideration of Kant's four faculties.²⁸ Turning now to the questions to be considered in more detail:

- (i) What is the relation between the understanding and the imagination?
- (ii) What is the transcendental subject and how does Kant explain the logic of its genesis?

It has already been stated that one of this book's main theses about Kant's thought is that it can be deepened in two directions: phenomenological and dialectical (in the Hegelian sense). This thesis – both aspects of which have obviously been defended at great length by important philosophers (Heidegger and the post-Kantian Idealists in particular) – will now be qualified in some detail. What I hope to show is how the dialectical and phenomenological extensions of Kantianism can be related. If this aim is successfully realized, it will give a preview of how dialectic and phenomenology can be related.²⁹

The location of the attempt to show how Kant's thought can lead to phenomenology is his account of the imagination as presented in the 'transcendental deduction of the categories' and the 'schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding'. The main claim is that a logical error lies at the heart of Kant's view of the imagination – an error that can only be overcome conceptually through philosophical dialectic. In brief it will be argued that the understanding and the imagination cannot be held apart as they are by Kant, since the crucial function of constituting unity is intrinsic to both, if in slightly different ways. The categories of the understanding, far from supplementing the syntheses of the imagination with unity and apriority...etc., will be shown to be abstractions from a pre-discursive imaginal unity – a unity whose logical structure is discovered only via dialectical thought. The conclusion will make it immediately clear why the imagination needs to be researched phenomenologically rather than discursively, i.e. why the need arises to develop a non-discursive method for researching the pre-discursive (imaginal) unity of experience.

How, then, are the understanding and the imagination related for Kant? It has been shown that both serve a unifying or synthesizing function: the understanding by providing – through the transcendental unity of apperception – the ground of all unity within consciousness; the imagination by synthesizing sensible and intelligible conditions of experience. The role the imagination plays in bringing the principle of unity to bear on a sensory manifold through the syntheses of apprehension, reproduction and recognition has already been discussed. A further crucial role it plays, which bears more directly on its relation to the understanding, is in creating what Kant calls *schemata* of the concepts of the understanding, which deal 'with the *sensible* condition[s] under which alone pure concepts of the understanding can be employed'.³⁰ Kant introduces the schema as a 'third thing' which stands 'in homogeneity with the category on the one hand and the appearance on the other and makes possible the application of the former to the latter'.³¹ By homogeneity Kant effectively means a relation of mediation, so that the third thing (the schema) plays the role of allowing two incongruous faculties or representations (i.e. pure concepts and sensory intuitions) to be brought into contact with one another by means of a third. Concerning the nature of schemata Kant then claims the following:

- 1 They must be pure like categories on the one hand, yet sensible like sensory intuitions on the other. Kant shows that these requirements are fulfilled by considering the schemata as rules or procedures for achieving 'unity in the determination of sensibility'. Schemata, in other words, are *a priori* realizations of the categories in relation to specific conditions (particularly temporal) of experience.

- 2 There are schemata of both empirical concepts (such as the concept of a dog) and of the pure concepts of the understanding. Both types of schema are *a priori*, but the first can be brought to bear on images and objects of experience, whereas the second cannot. Examples of each are: (i) The schemata of a triangle and a dog are rules of synthesis of the imagination with regard to shapes in space – the first with regard to pure geometrical shapes, the second with regard to the shape of a four-footed animal in general.³² (ii) The schemata of the categories of, for example, substance, causality and necessity are respectively: a) ‘the persistence of the real in time’, b) ‘the succession of the manifold in so far as it is subject to a rule’ and c) ‘the existence of an object at all times’.³³

Kant emphasizes that the schemata of empirical concepts are presuppositions of images, though not the same as the latter, since an image contains sensory content. He thus calls the schema of an empirical concept ‘as it were a monogram [i.e. a picture drawn in lines³⁴] of a *a priori* imagination’.³⁵ The important point about the schema is its universality (its purity), namely that it is an *a priori* transcendental determination of sensibility that applies to all particulars (if it is a schema of a pure concept), or to many particulars of a certain class – e.g. animals, geometrical shapes...

A schema is thus ‘a general procedure of the imagination for providing a concept with its image’.³⁶ An obvious question arises at this point: what is the relation between the three forms of synthesis distinguished in the sketch of the imagination and this new synthesis of schematization? The first thing to say is that the synthesis performed by the imagination in creating schemata is pure and does not involve sensory intuitions. The three forms of synthesis distinguished previously, on the other hand, all involve the constitution of unity within a sensory manifold. They thus produce the images to which the schemata are applied.³⁷ A second point is that synthesis is clearly a presupposition of schematization, since there cannot be a schema of any dog or triangle, either spacial or temporal, until these have been cognized in a preliminary fashion via the synthesis of a sensory manifold. Of course it is also clear that there can be no concept of a dog until the synthesis of recognition has taken place, which would make it seem as though the schema of an empirical concept – i.e. the general form for conceiving a synthesized sensory manifold in space and time – is realized alongside its concept. This thought is confirmed by the observation that the categories are fully invoked in both cases.

It is through his consideration of schemata that Kant consolidates the claim that the pure concepts of the understanding have their significance in relation to experience only, for schemata are necessary conditions of the realization of categories. The concepts of substance and cause, for example, remain empty – i.e. ‘are only functions of the understanding of concepts, but do not represent any object’³⁸ – without a transcendental time-determination in which they can be fulfilled, which also means that the concepts of the understanding are limited and not just realized by sensibility.³⁹

What then really is the relation between the understanding and the imagination? It has been shown that Kant considers four main kinds of synthesis of the imagination – of apprehension, reproduction, recognition and schematization – and that all are *a priori* and involve both sensibility and the understanding. It has also been shown that Kant calls the imagination a blind function of the soul, thus one whose synthesizing processes are largely superconscious (i.e. we are aware of their consequences,

but not of the processes themselves, since our thought presupposes synthesis and so cannot, as a matter of transcendental necessity, have awareness of its constituent components – categories, pure and sensory intuitions...). The imagination thus blindly constitutes unities of cognitive elements (e.g. images and schemata) through syntheses which make possible our experience of a world of objects. The understanding, on the other hand, provides the pure categories that give this synthesis unity.

It is on this last thought – that there is a significant distinction between unity and synthesis – that Kant's position in the transcendental analytic depends. For if the distinction is a fiction, Kant falls prey to the transcendental illusion that arises through the following argument:

- (i) The imagination unifies/synthesizes the concepts of the understanding with sensible intuitions (both *a priori* and *a posteriori*).
- (ii) The concepts of unity and synthesis have their transcendental ground in the understanding – and in particular in the transcendental unity of apperception. From which follows,
- (iii) That the notion of unity/synthesis cannot be invoked to explain the workings of the imagination, since it is intrinsic to the understanding.
- (iv) Kant's mistake is thus either a) to employ a category of the understanding beyond its legitimate sphere of application – which is to make a transcendental error, or b) to make an unjustified separation of the imagination from the understanding.⁴⁰

Kant certainly intended to see the imagination as something that synthesizes, whereas the understanding adds unity to this synthesis. But is there a valid distinction between unity and synthesis as used by Kant? It was shown that Kant defines synthesis as 'the action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition'.⁴¹ Given this definition it is surely at the very least difficult if not impossible to see how the act of synthesis does not imply unity in some way. (This is not to say that the distinction Kant draws between the immediate [i.e. pre-discursive] synthesis of the manifold and that synthesis which is implied by the use of concepts is not a valid one, but simply to say that they are both forms of constituting unity – one immediate, the other reflective or, as Kant puts it, 'intellectual'.⁴²)

Kant hence does not avoid making the transcendental error here described. He rather disguises this error by implying that synthesis does not involve the constitutive application of categories in the way that the unification of the understanding does. The outcome of this is that the imagination cannot function successfully in Kant's account as the faculty which unites sensibility and understanding, for it could do so only by helping itself to one of those constitutive concepts of the understanding whose application to the appearances – i.e. to a realm that has no pre-conceptual unity – it is supposed to explain. Synthesis cannot, in short, operate without categories.⁴³

The difficulty Kant faced in trying to conceive the relation between two quite distinct faculties is very similar to a much better known one, the 'third man' paradox already familiar to ancient philosophers. To say that the imagination is a distinct synthesizing faculty is a little like saying that there is a third something unifying the universal and the particular (or indeed the concept and the percept), to which the question arises: What relates this third thing to its relata?, with an attendant endless

regress. The argument will be that in both examples – the understanding-sensibility opposition and the universal-particular one – the solution is to be found in the method of philosophical dialectic. The logic of a dialectical argument reveals an opposition to presuppose a synthesis or underlying unity. Thus the universal and the particular are not two distinct entities that need to be united by a third, but rather two aspects of a single reality in which they necessarily coexist as a unity, the individual. The main problem with Kant's more dualistic conception, is that it forces him to consider certain pre-categorical representations (such as sensory intuitions) using language (e.g. in talk about representations) in which categories are already implicitly embedded.

When the dialectical method is applied to the opposition between faculties instead of to discretely conceived epistemological entities, a slightly different picture emerges. On the analogy of the above argument, the imagination must play the role of the unity that underlies the opposition of the understanding and sensibility. But the imagination is above all a synthetic *process* which results in an image. A dialectic of the opposition of the understanding and sensibility would be a processual dialectic in which the imagination (i.e. the image-process) was seen to constitute a pre-dualistic ground of empirical thinking content. So the imagination – in so far as it gives us experience of the empirical world – could be seen not as synthesizing discrete and unrelated representations, but as reconstituting a unity (the image-process) that has been sundered only by the insertion of the human organization into the world as a whole.⁴⁴ The understanding and sensibility would then be seen as abstracted representations of the intelligible and sensible conditions of experience, which in reality always exist as a unity.

Such a dialectic of the imagination would then give way to phenomenology when it was recognized that the categories of the understanding, far from being ultimate constitutive elements of our experience, are abstractions from a much richer, pre-discursive horizon of being, which phenomenology must take it upon itself to discover. (The thinking of Heidegger and other twentieth century phenomenologists has already gone a long way to completing the initial stages of this task – especially in the account they have given of how time and space can be considered as intrinsic features of that pre-discursive unity. What this tradition lacks above all, however, is a) a means of integrating phenomenology as a method with dialectic and its results [i.e. with rationalism], and b) an ontology that facilitates a discussion between philosophy and natural science or even a unification of them – a discussion that Kant renounced when he drove a wedge between transcendental and empirical conditions of experience, and that this book is attempting to revive in arguing for the need for a transcendental ontology.) The idea of a dialectical ground of phenomenology realized through the imagination is only mentioned here to show how the tensions that plague the relations between Kant's different faculties might be resolved.

The phenomenological extension of Kant's thought that has been outlined will therefore be shown to have its discursive ground in philosophical dialectic, in which – with Hegel's help – the true logical form of the *a priori* will be discovered. Before this is discussed, however, Kant's transcendental subject must be examined more carefully, since this is the most important precursor of Hegel's conception of subjectivity, which – it will be argued – is the logical foundation of his dialectic. The transcendental subject is also the ground of the understanding for Kant and, if the

argument criticizing the distinction between unity and synthesis is accepted, implicitly of his conception of the imagination too.⁴⁵

1.2 The Transcendental Unity of Apperception

How, then, does Kant conceive the transcendental unity of apperception? The most important claims he makes for it are:

- (i) It is a pure, original and unchanging consciousness (it is thus a numerical unity) that 'grounds all concepts [and thus categories] *a priori*'⁴⁶ and thus all experience.
- (ii) The unity of consciousness would not be possible if it were not conscious of itself as the unity of consciousness. Thus: the unity of consciousness is necessarily self-consciousness.⁴⁷
- (iii) The unity of consciousness is a unity constituted through a manifold, without which it would not be possible. Self-consciousness hence presupposes consciousness of a manifold and vice-versa.⁴⁸
- (iv) The analytical unity of apperception, i.e. the fact that self-consciousness is *intrinsic* to consciousness of a manifold, presupposes a synthetic one, i.e. the original constitution of this unity in relation to a manifold.⁴⁹
- (v) Pure or original apperception – the production of the representation 'I think' – cannot be accompanied by any further representation and is purely spontaneous.⁵⁰
- (vi) The I is a mere consciousness that accompanies every concept. One cannot even say that it is a concept.⁵¹
- (vii) The 'I think' can be conceived as a subject which contains its predicate in itself without being a predicate of another subject, whereas other subjects – e.g. dog, triangle – are subjects which are predicates of the 'I think'.⁵²
- (viii) 'Self-consciousness in general is... the representation of that which is the condition of all unity, and yet is itself unconditioned.'⁵³
- (ix) The 'I think' does not cognize itself through the categories, but rather the categories through itself or through 'the absolute unity of apperception'.⁵⁴
- (x) There is a distinction between a determining Self (the thinking process) and a determinable Self (the thinking subject as an object of consciousness). This distinction has the consequence 'that I cannot cognize as an object itself that which I must presuppose in order to cognize an object at all'.⁵⁵ The unity in the synthesis of thoughts cannot thus be considered a unity in their subject.
- (xi) The self cannot be cognized as an object, because it is always presupposed in any cognition of an object.⁵⁶ At A346 Kant calls this circularity – in which the I chases itself like a dog chasing its tail – an 'inconvenience' (*eine Unbequemlichkeit*).
- (xii) The 'I think' is the 'supreme principle in the whole of human cognition'.⁵⁷

The main challenge of this discussion of the 'I think' is to understand why Kant conceived it to be not a substance but rather a mere 'form of representation' (just as space and time are forms of intuition). It focuses on: a) the relation between the 'I think' considered as a purely spontaneously generated representation, and Kant's claim that a manifold is needed before it can arise, b) the roles played by Kant's

conceptions of the understanding, imagination and sensibility in determining his view of the 'I think', and c) how some of Kant's non-critical reflections – some ideas from his *Lectures on Rational Psychology* will be mentioned – can help us to understand the cognitive limitations he placed on any concept of self. A crucial conclusion defended is that a very important source of Kant's scepticism about the self is the unbridgeable epistemic divide between transcendental and empirical conditions of experience – e.g. sensibility as a faculty and the organs of sense – introduced above. It is this divide which prevents us from knowing the relation between the thinking self and the physical body, and that consequently motivates Kant's restriction of the validity of metaphysics to its function of revealing conditions of experience and the limits of thought.

Why, then, is for Kant the 'I think' merely a form of representation and not a substance? The first part of the answer to this question concentrates on why Kant thought that the categories – for example unity – could only apply legitimately to the appearances, and not to the apparent objects of ideas of reason such as God or, in the case of man, the 'absolutely unconditioned subject of all thought'. Kant's main reason for arguing this position was that he considered the appearances to be a necessary condition of the realization of categories, and thus also intrinsic to any explanatory account of their genesis. He thus claims that the transcendental unity of apperception is originally constituted synthetically in relation to a manifold. If Kant can sustain the claim that self-consciousness (or the unity of apperception) depends upon a manifold, then (since this unity is the subject of which the categories are predicates) he will have shown that the categories also only arise through – and so get their content from – the manifold; that is, he will have shown that the understanding is actualized only in relation to sensibility.

If his argument fails – namely if consciousness of self does not presuppose consciousness of the manifold and vice-versa – then so does Kant's claim that the categories cannot have a purely *a priori* application and validity. The analytical unity of apperception (i.e. the fact that it is intrinsic to the 'I think' to bestow unity) would then not depend upon a prior synthetic unity. What then is the synthetic unity of apperception? Kant says it arises by my 'adding one representation to the other and being conscious of their synthesis'.⁵⁸ To be conscious of a synthesis of representations is thus *a priori* to be conscious that *I* am synthesizing them, which means to make the unity of consciousness into a representation. Kant's argument then concludes: 'therefore it is only because I can combine a manifold of given representations in one consciousness [the synthetic unity of apperception] that it is possible for me to represent the identity of the consciousness in these representations itself [the analytical unity of apperception]'.⁵⁹ This argument, however, commits a basic error. If the unity of apperception is both intrinsic to the 'I think' and the condition of unity of the manifold, then it cannot be derived or abstracted in any way from that manifold. The unity of the manifold itself only becomes possible through the unity that is intrinsic to the 'I think'.⁶⁰ Put another way, an analytical truth of this form (unity has its exclusive ground in – i.e. is intrinsic to – the 'I think' or self-consciousness) cannot presuppose an apparently synthetic one (unity arises from the synthesis of a manifold).

That Kant came very close to recognizing that self-consciousness cannot be derived from the manifold, is demonstrated by his notion of an original act of apperception in which the 'I think' is made into the sole content of a representation (see (v)

above).⁶¹ The important point about this original act, for Kant, is that it is purely spontaneous, which of course invites the question: what relation can a purely spontaneous act of apperception (i.e. of thinking unity in the 'I think') possibly have to a sensory manifold? Even Kant admits that it can have no such relation, and thus also implicitly that its unity is intrinsic to it.⁶²

What then follows if self-consciousness (i.e. the unity of apperception) does not arise in relation to a manifold, but rather as a purely spontaneous act of self-positing? Must we then say that the 'I think' is the unconditioned (i.e. logically self-contained) ground of all thought? Kant's only remaining reason for arguing against this lies in the distinction he makes between the determining and the determined self (see (x) above). If this distinction turns out to be invalid, then the 'I think' that is made into the content of thought in the original act of apperception must be identical with the 'I think' that generates it, with the result that the opposition or mutual externality of subject and object is overcome and the 'I think' is revealed to be the unconditioned ground of all thought.

What reasons can Kant then have for keeping the subject and the content of thought distinct when I think the 'I think' – i.e. when I make 'I' into an object of thought? Kant's only option is to say that the 'I think' is a representation of an unknown X, the thing-in-itself underlying the conscious appearance of selfhood. However, this thought reveals itself to be empty, as is shown by the following argument, whose initial premises (i.e. (i) – (iii)) we already find in Kant's thought:

- (i) The 'I think' is the subject of every thought. It is thus the subject of which everything that falls within my world is a predicate.
- (ii) The 'I think' is intrinsically self-conscious. There could not be an 'I think' that was not self-conscious.
- (iii) Being self-conscious is not simply one of many possible predicates of the 'I think' but rather the 'I think' as such. The 'I' is thus necessarily self-consciousness and nothing more or less than this.
- (iv) When the 'I think' thinks itself as object (or as the content of thought), which it must do in order to arise at all, subject and predicate are one and the same. (We must hence contrast: 'I am I' with e.g. 'the dog has a tail'. A dog has its predicates outside of itself as subject, whereas the 'I think' does not.)
- (v) But a subject that necessarily contains its predicate within itself cannot be the representation of a transcendent object, for such an object is only thinkable if there is a possible separation of the subject from the predicate – as there is for all subjects other than the 'I think'. Thus: to give content to a subject like 'dog' I have to add predicates that pick out its different properties. Since these predicates are both a) given through experience which depends upon the senses, and b) not immediately given within the subject term itself, there is always the possibility that they are merely partial or inadequate representations of an underlying reality. Yet this cannot be the case for the subject term 'I', since its predicate (i.e. absolute unity) is contained within it. Therefore,
- (vi) There cannot be a subject underlying the 'I think' as its transcendent object.

A subject that immediately and necessarily has itself for its object Schelling and Hegel called absolute. For nothing can lie outside of such a subject – it being logically

entirely self-contained or the true thing-in-itself (Kant) that is only in-itself for-itself (Hegel). (Any object within my world, by contrast, is represented as in-itself for me or for the 'I think'. The point about an absolute subject is that it achieves the logical closure that is a presupposition of considering the thing-in-itself coherently.) In the idea of such a subject, all separation between subject and object, man and world, mind and body... is implicitly overcome. This idea will not be considered further here, for this is the task of the discussion of Hegel. The argument offered above as a criticism of Kant appears in Hegel's thought in a much more refined and complex context. Here only its initial steps have been indicated.

From the above it follows that Kant's conception of the 'I think' is already very close to the idea of something truly unconditioned. The only step of his argument that stands in the way of this thought from a more formal perspective (as will shortly be seen, there are other grounds Kant would have had for criticizing the idea) is that the analytical unity of apperception presupposes the synthetic one. Once the flaw in this thought is recognized – i.e. that unity cannot be both intrinsic to the 'I think' and depend upon a manifold – then the act that achieves the representation 'I' as a content of thought can no longer be considered synthetic (an act in which elements are united), for there can be no elements to unite until the 'I think' has appeared to give them their individual unity as distinct representations. Original apperception is then not so much a synthesis of elements as the immediate positing of an absolute unity. In short the 'I' cannot be split into elements at all since unity is intrinsic to it and to it alone. It is always and so necessarily numerically one.⁶³

Even if one has demonstrated that the 'I think' is an unconditioned ground of all thought and a thing-in-itself (i.e. in and for itself), questions still remain about its relation to the other faculties. If our conception of ourselves as subjects is given through the spontaneous act of a thinking subject, our more detailed conceptions of ourselves as distinct individuals with a body, feelings and personality... are given through other faculties, in particular sensibility and the imagination that unites it with the understanding. I hence now turn to the role that Kant's conception of the other faculties has in determining the limitations he placed upon the 'I think'.

Before considering the 'I think' it was argued that the imagination cannot be conceived as a faculty that performs synthetic functions independently of the categories. A consequence of this is that its function as a blind source of synthesis has to be related directly to the thinking subject or the transcendental unity of apperception. But this raises the following problem: It was shown above that Kant considered the relation between transcendental and empirical conditions of experience (e.g. between organs of sense and sensibility as a faculty) to be unknowable. What this of course means is that highly significant aspects of the thinking process (namely those in which the conscious and the non-conscious are related) remain inaccessible to thought. But if the transcendental subject is itself synthetically active in constituting what is experienced as an object of sense, then significant aspects of its nature also remain concealed from our understanding. Our inability to understand the ground of sensibility hence has the necessary consequence that there is much about the way in which the sensible and the intelligible are reconstituted within thought that is unknown. The true ground of the imagination and of the 'I think' as the ground of synthesis must hence lie – from this Kantian perspective – beyond the reach of ordinary consciousness.

Truly to understand the 'I think', in other words, we need to know its relation to sensibility, and this means to understand the different relations between mind (considered as the horizon of inner sense), body (as an object of outer sense) and world (everything given as an object of experience within the horizon of an 'I think'), since all are instrumental in giving us the experience that the subject of thought – absolute though it must be in its logical form – generates. The experience of the unity of subject and object that is achieved by philosophical dialectic should thus be seen not as the final entry into the land of truth, but rather as one that offers rational visions of a possible unity of spirit and matter; visions that remain ontologically underdetermined until the transcendental ground of the unity of the intelligible and the sensible is understood.

It is Kant's sensitivity to the great distance still separating thinking and being in the modern understanding of human nature – a sensitivity not shared in equal measure by Hegel – which underlies his scepticism, for he comes very close to discovering the logic of the self that his Idealist successors developed.⁶⁴

1.3 The Esoteric Kant

So to the last part of the discussion of Kant. Here I consider certain claims he makes in his *Lectures on Rational Psychology*, the first of which were delivered in 1783 (only two years after the publication of the first edition of the *Critique*).⁶⁵ In these Kant reveals a non-critical side of his thought that is at points quite esoteric, even mystical. He argues in favour of the soul's existence before and after death, and claims that when free from a body it knows a supersensible reality that remains concealed from it during physical incarnation. In other words, Kant displays strong Platonic traits in these lectures. These are of interest for the purposes of this book mainly as confirmation that Kant saw the union in man's embodied state of spiritual and non-spiritual faculties (i.e. of the understanding and sensibility) as an important ground for placing limits on our ability to know. Kant, in other words, limits reason not only to make way for faith, as is often said of him, but also to make way for a rich spiritual life after death.

In these lectures Kant subscribes to, amongst others, the following doctrines, some of which he argues for philosophically:⁶⁶

- (i) There exists a) a supersensible world, and b) a real transcendental subject that incarnates in a human body at birth, though never in man's embodied state completely. (This can be seen as a ground for Kant's claim that the 'I think' is a representation of a transcendent object.)
- (ii) This transcendental subject exists before and after death. Its post-mortem existence is its normal and true condition.⁶⁷ Its incarnated state is exceptional.
- (iii) The voice of conscience is the voice of this transcendental subject.

Let us, though, quote Kant himself: 'Life in human beings is twofold: animal and spiritual. The animal element is the life of the human as human; for this the body is necessary, so that the human being might live. The other life is the spiritual one where the soul has to continue, independently of the body, to exercise the acts [*actus*] of

life...⁶⁸ When thus the machine that is the body is destroyed so that the soul can no longer function in it, then animal life ends but not the spiritual.⁶⁹ It is noteworthy here that Kant identifies life with the 'animal element' in humans, rather than with their plant-like element, since it shows that his conception of the possible nature of levels of being which mediate between pure thought and the physical world is limited.⁷⁰ Although he argues in the *Critique of Judgement* that distinct formative forces must exist in nature – 'for to suppose that crude matter, obeying mechanical laws, was originally its own architect, that life could have sprung up from the nature of what is void of life, and matter spontaneously have adopted the form of a self-maintaining finality, [is justly declared [by the biologist Blumenbach, whom Kant quotes approvingly]] to be contrary to reason'⁷¹ – Kant has little concrete sense of how such formative forces might actually be known.⁷²

But what of the character of the soul's life after death? Here Kant says: 'The separation of the soul from the body is not to be thought of as a change of place... When the soul is separated from the body, it will not have the same sensory perception of the world...; it will not see the world as it appears, but rather *as it is*.'⁷³ Here at last we come into contact with the thing-in-itself, which turns out to be a supersensible reality, perhaps akin to a Platonic form, that we know when our souls are freed from the prison of the body. Thus further: 'I cannot be simultaneously in this world [the world of the senses] and in that one [the spiritual world], since when I have a sensory perception I am in this world, and when I have a spiritual one, I am in the other world. These cannot take place simultaneously.'⁷⁴ Though as to the nature of the soul after death, Kant is more hesitant: 'With reference to the composition of the nature of the soul beyond the boundary of life, we cannot say anything reliable, since the limits of reason stretch as far as this boundary, but cannot extend beyond it.'⁷⁵ Once again Kant claims that it is the afterlife that frees us from the constraints of the understanding.

For those of us used to secular readings of Kant, quotations like these may come as a bit of a surprise. However, within the context of Kant's overall metaphysical position they make complete sense. Kant thought both a) that natural science could not give us knowledge of either the ground of sensibility or of the formative forces of living organisms, and b) that the understanding is spontaneous and irreducible. The belief that we gain true knowledge of transcendent reality when the soul is freed from the body is perfectly consistent with both of these philosophically argued positions.

This concludes the discussion of Kant. I have argued:

- 1 Kant's thought can be deepened philosophically in two directions: dialectic and phenomenology.⁷⁶
- 2 Kant makes two important errors in the *Critique*: (i) He attempts to distinguish synthesis and unity in a way that makes synthesis possible without the constitutive application of categories. (ii) He similarly attempts to ground unity through a manifold, instead of recognizing that unity must be intrinsic to the transcendental unity of apperception and so a condition of unity in the manifold, not generated through it.
- 3 The solution to both of these errors is dialectical. The first leads to a conception of the imagination as the most important of the faculties active in constituting experience and relates it directly to the 'I think'. The second opens the path to the discovery of a unified conception of the categories as found in Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

- 4 Kant's esoteric ideas help us to understand the limits he placed on human reason. In particular they show us that he conceived the synthesis of spontaneous and receptive faculties in the human organization as dulling the capacities of the former, whose true possibilities are realized only beyond the limits of biological life. The notion of the 'thing-in-itself' is also undoubtedly influenced by Kant's exposure to esoteric ideas.⁷⁷

Notes

- 1 In the footnote to *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR) B (i.e. second edition) 134 he thus says 'The synthetic unity of apperception [the I think] is the highest point to which one must affix all use of the understanding, even the whole of logic and, after it, transcendental philosophy; indeed *this faculty is the understanding itself*'. (My italics.)
- 2 CPR A (i.e. first edition) 19.
- 3 CPR A19.
- 4 On intensive magnitudes see CPR A166–76.
- 5 CPR A107.
- 6 CPR A51.
- 7 CPR A80.
- 8 CPR B139.
- 9 Kant thus says of this unity: 'We are conscious *a priori* of the thoroughgoing identity of ourselves with regard to all representations that can ever belong to our cognition, as a necessary condition of the possibility of all representations' (CPR A116).
- 10 CPR B141. The objective unity of apperception is to be distinguished from a subjective or empirical unity of consciousness, which is the specific, contingent way in which the unity of consciousness is realized for a particular individual. This subjective unity presupposes the objective. See CPR B139–40.
- 11 CPR A78.
- 12 CPR A77.
- 13 See CPR B151–2.
- 14 CPR B151.
- 15 CPR A98. In German, 'Von der Synthesis der Apprehension in der Anschauung'.
- 16 CPR A100: 'Von der Synthesis der Reproduktion in der Einbildung.'
- 17 Kant considers the specific way in which regularity of association in thought arises to be contingent and empirical. What is necessary is that there should be a unity to the different elements of a representation.
- 18 CPR A103: 'Von der Synthesis der Rekognition im Begriffe.'
- 19 CPR A107.
- 20 CPR A108.
- 21 CPR A109.
- 22 The transcendental unity of apperception will be discussed in further detail shortly.
- 23 CPR A114.
- 24 CPR A302. Principles, such as the principle of sufficient reason, are general rules of reason of ostensible universal validity.
- 25 See CPR A308.
- 26 CPR A334. Although reason has its own ideas, it does not generate these out of itself as out of an entirely independent source of representations. Rather it creates its ideas by reflecting on the concepts of the understanding. The discoveries of reason can thus really be seen, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* at least, as a form of self-knowledge of the understanding.

- What makes reason into a distinct faculty is that its ideas have nothing to do with the possibility of experience.
- 27 In the discussion of Steiner his implicit attempt to unite ideas of reason with objects of experience through an ontological dialectic grounded in the idea of resurrection will be outlined. The object of the idea of the self is the resurrected body in which self and body (or form and matter) are united.
- 28 The above discussion has obviously only considered the faculties as presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Gilles Deleuze, in his book *Kant's Critical Philosophy* (London: Athlone Publishers, 1984), has given an interesting interpretation of how reason, the understanding and the imagination play different roles in each of Kant's three critiques, with the understanding dominant in the first, reason in the second – i.e. Kant's ethics – and the imagination in the *Critique of Judgement*.
- 29 This will also be considered in chapter 7. However, a more comprehensive treatment would be another project.
- 30 CPR A136. My italics.
- 31 CPR A138.
- 32 See CPR A140–1. The schema of a dog obviously contains *a priori* time determinations as well as a spatial one, since our concept of a dog is of something that moves in a certain way..., whereas a triangle is a purely spatial entity, though the procedure of constructing one in space involves temporal determinations.
- 33 CPR A144. Kant only considers the schemata of pure categories in relation to time (i.e. inner sense), not space.
- 34 See the Oxford English Dictionary entry on 'monogram', where two senses are distinguished: 1. 'a picture drawn in lines without shading or colour; a sketch', and 2. 'a character composed of two or more letters interwoven together'.
- 35 CPR A142. Kant emphasizes (on the same page) that 'this schematism of our understanding with regard to appearances and their mere form is a *hidden art in the depths of the human soul*, whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes only with difficulty'. (My italics.) This statement of Kant's can be taken as implying that he thought there was much about schemata that could not be understood. It also opens the door to the notion of unconscious cognitive processes and representations – which is an idea anyway necessitated by Kant's scepticism about the knowability of the relation between empirical and transcendental conditions of experience (i.e. if we really knew our knowing, we should know its absolute ground, which would be to bring within the horizon of consciousness those processes that are – for Kant – necessarily excluded from it). How one might penetrate more deeply into those 'hidden arts in the depths of the human soul' that would give us knowledge of how what Kant calls schemata are truly constituted is a question that will be considered in chapter 7.
- 36 CPR A140.
- 37 See CPR A141.
- 38 CPR A147.
- 39 See CPR A146.
- 40 This option will be considered following the discussion of the transcendental unity of apperception.
- 41 CPR A77.
- 42 See CPR A124. The difference between the two is really very similar to that between two of the forms of consciousness described in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*: sense-certainty, in which there is an immediate unity of consciousness (of apperception) and the object; and perception, in which the object is a thing with properties experienced as distinct from the unity of apperception or the 'I think'. Hegel's notion of a form of consciousness will be discussed in chapter 2.

- 43 One possible way of resolving the conflict between synthesis and unity would be to say that synthesis is the superconscious act whose result is the experience of unity in a manifold. This does not solve the problem of the relation between the understanding and the imagination, however, since it still implies that the imagination employs categories constitutively, albeit blindly.
- 44 This is how Steiner conceives cognition. See his *The Philosophy of Freedom* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1964), chapter 5.
- 45 Kant thus calls the understanding 'the unity of apperception in relation to the synthesis of the imagination' (CPR A119), which, given that Kant saw the understanding as being realized by schemata (thus by sensibility) which are constituted through synthesis, again implies that synthesis and unity are inseparable and so artificially distinguished by Kant.
- 46 CPR A107.
- 47 CPR A108.
- 48 CPR B133–4.
- 49 CPR B133–4.
- 50 CPR B132.
- 51 CPR A346.
- 52 CPR A401. Kant considers this way of conceiving the subject – as logically simple – to be empty because it tells us nothing concrete about the possible post-mortem persistence of such a subject. The intrinsic transcendental logic of the 'I think' is, in other words, empirically underdetermined.
- 53 CPR A401.
- 54 CPR A402.
- 55 CPR A402.
- 56 CPR A402.
- 57 CPR B135.
- 58 CPR B133.
- 59 CPR B133.
- 60 In claiming the contrary Kant makes the same mistake that he made when trying to distinguish the unity of the understanding from the synthesis of the imagination. In both cases the effort is made to consider the origin of unity in relation to something for which unity is supposed to be extrinsic – i.e. the imagination (whose synthetic acts are a condition of the application of the categories to the appearances) and the manifold.
- 61 When this happens, the 'I think' is not merely the *form* of representation, but also a content of thought.
- 62 This is not to say that self-consciousness does not require a physiologically advanced organization in which to appear. It simply says that the actual explanation of the nature of self-consciousness can have nothing to do with this organization. See also chapters 4 and 6.
- 63 Several of Kant's references to the 'I think', cited at the beginning of this section, further back up the argument that he was very close to thinking of the 'supreme principle of human cognition' as I have suggested it should be thought of. (i), (ii), (v), (vii), (ix) and (xi) all lead to the idea that the self is unconditioned in the way suggested if their implications are fully thought through. Once again, many of these ideas will be considered in more depth in the following chapters.
- 64 In his *Opus postumum* – parts of which may have been influenced by Schelling (see B. Tuschling's paper 'Die Idee des Transzendentalen Idealismus' in *Übergang – Untersuchungen zum Spätwerk Immanuel Kants*, ed. Forum für Philosophie Bad Homburg (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991), p. 123) – Kant is unambiguous in his statement that the self posits itself and so is basic. See e.g. AA 22: 413 or 22: 418f. (*Opus postumum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 179, 183.)

- 65 These survive in the form of a series of transcripts. On the authenticity of these transcripts see G. Florschütz's very interesting little book *Swedenborgs verborgene Wirkung auf Kant* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1992), p. 152f. In this book Florschütz argues that the work of the well-known scientist and occultist Swedenborg (1688–1772) had a significant if complex influence on Kant. The essay of Kant's – *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated By Dreams of Metaphysics*, written in 1766 – in which he criticizes Swedenborg, albeit somewhat humourously, is well known. Less well known are scattered remarks (in e.g. a letter of 1763 (AA X, p. 40f.) and also in the *Lectures on Rational Psychology*), discussed in some detail by Florschütz, where Kant speaks highly of the occultist. Some of the claims Kant makes in the lectures – to be discussed shortly – prove to be striking echoes of typically Swedenborgian doctrines. (For an esotericist's critique of Swedenborg's specific form of clairvoyance, see Steiner's lecture cycle translated as *The Evolution of Consciousness*: lecture 7 of 25.8.1923. Here Steiner compares the methods of clairvoyance exercised by Boehme, Paracelsus and Swedenborg and indicates the limits of each.)
- 66 These doctrines were summarized by Carl Du Prel in his *Kants mystische Weltanschauung* (Pforzheim: Rudolf Fischer Verlag, 1964), first published in 1889.
- 67 See *Lectures on Rational Psychology* as transcribed by Mrongovius, p. 215 (AA XXIX.1.2, p. 913).
- 68 The argument that being alive is *intrinsic* to the soul (that it is thus immortal) can be found in Plato's *Phaedo*. See from 105c.
- 69 *Lectures on Rational Psychology* as transcribed by Pölitz p. 235 (AA XXVIII.1.1, p. 286); my translation. In the German original: 'Das Leben bei dem Menschen ist zweifach: das thierische und das geistige Leben. Das thierische ist das Leben des Menschen, als Mensch; und hierzu ist der Körper nöthig, daß der Mensch lebe. Das andere Leben ist das geistige Leben, wo die Seele, unabhängig vom Körper, dieselben Actus des Lebens auszuüben continuieren muß... Wenn nun die Maschine des Körpers zerstört ist, daß die Seele in sie nicht mehr wirken kann; so hört zwar das thierische Leben auf, aber nicht das geistige.'
- 70 This is confirmed by his scepticism about our ability to say anything clear about something 'intermediate between matter and thinking things' at CPR A222–3. Though see also the footnote at the end of this paragraph.
- 71 *Critique of Judgement*, A 374, B 379 (Meredith trans. II, p. 85f.; AA V, p. 424).
- 72 Following Blumenbach Kant speaks about a 'principle of a primordial organization' which stands as the 'higher guidance' of a living organism. Although in his earlier critical writings Kant thought such a principle to be unknowable, in his *Opus postumum* he advances his notorious *a priori* defence of the existence of an all-penetrating ether. B. Edwards (in *Übergang – Untersuchungen zum Spätwerk Immanuel Kant*) summarizes Kant's view of the properties of this ether: a) its existence cannot be demonstrated through experience – indeed it in principle lies beyond the limits of possible experience for Kant; b) it is an elementary substance and can be called either an ether, a warmth substance or a light substance; c) it fills all space and interpenetrates all individual substances; d) it is a self-moving force continuum which both attracts and repulses and behaves in a wavelike fashion; e) it exists independently of the subject and is both the causal ground of perception and a transcendental condition of the unity of our experience. (Edwards relates these latter claims to the third analogy of the first *Critique*, in which Kant considers the principle of the simultaneity of our experiences. He claims that Kant's ether goes some way towards fulfilling the conceptual needs of the concept of simultaneity.) Kant's conception of this ether clearly sees him trying to break new ground and to revise considerably some of the views of his earlier, critical thought. Despite the epistemological points Kant makes, however, the force of his argument comes from his reflections as a meta-

physical physicist. Kant always defended the view that space could not be empty (i.e. Plenism), and the concept of the ether plays above all the role of a dynamic conception of matter able to realize the implications of this view. It is hence a theory with less relevance to epistemology and indeed biology in the form in which he develops it, than to physics. There has been considerable debate concerning the relation of Kant's ether-conception to his critical writings. For present purposes the following points can be made:

- 1 Although this ether clearly has considerable implications for Kant's critical thought (Mathieu, for example, claims that the role played by time in Kant's schematism is taken over in his later thought by the ether – see his *Kants Opus postumum*, p. 140), it does not resolve the crucial question of the transcendental origin of sensibility, since Kant – in contrast to Steiner – is not able to make a direct link between this ether and the consciously experienced qualities of sensory experience. (For Steiner this connection is made by the concept of astral matter, which Steiner distinguishes from the etheric.) Thus although Kant attempts to argue on *a priori* grounds that this ether must exist, his claim can have no substantial ontological force, since it does not overcome his own epistemological scepticism. (Why in more detail this is the case will become more obvious when Steiner's transcendental ontology is briefly considered in chapter 7. See also Appendix 1 in which what would still be missing from Kant's account, even with the inclusion of his ether-conception, is outlined.)
- 2 Kant's ether-conception marks an obvious tension-filled boundary of his thought which sees Kant the metaphysical physicist and ontologist coming into an on his own terms irreconcilable conflict with Kant the transcendental logician and epistemologist. (This tension is the inevitable result of any failed attempt to harmonize the *a posteriori* and the *a priori*, as will be seen in the discussion of Hegel. How it might be overcome will be demonstrated in chapter 7.) As an example of this conflict it can be pointed out that even with his ether-concept Kant could not even begin to answer such questions as how the transcendental subject is related to this ether, and how it is individualized in the human body.

73 *Lectures on Rational Psychology* (Pölitiz) p. 254 (AA XXVIII.1.1, p. 297); my italics.

74 Ibid. p. 259 (AA 300).

75 Ibid. p. 252 (AA 295). At CPR A222–3 Kant speaks out against faculties of the mind which might achieve some kind of immediate knowledge of phenomena on the grounds that they are not objects of possible experience.

76 The dialectical conception of the imagination has important consequences for both the understanding and the validity/applicability of Hegelian speculative logic. The most significant of these is that the logic of the absolute self can be fulfilled ontologically only by a substance that is shown to be the ground not only of the intelligible but also of the sensible element of the imaginal unity of ordinary experience. See also chapter 7.

77 The discussion of Steiner will show that what Kant thought could be known only after death, can be known also in the embodied state. Steiner's refined anthropological ontology is the fulfilment of this claim.

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Chapter 2

From Kant to Hegel

The previous chapter has shown that Kant imposes two kinds of limits on knowledge:

a) At the empirical level he argues, in the *Critique of Judgement*, that man cannot know the structural unity of living organisms (and thus the formative, vital forces through which this unity is realized). b) At the theoretical level he argues that reason cannot discover the true ground of either the world (with its experiential ground in sensibility) or human thought and that the 'I think' omnipresent in human experience is thus not a substance (i.e. ontologically basic). These limits are the two natural consequences of restricting our knowledge claims to the sphere of the understanding, and Hegel attempts to overcome them both.

In his third *Critique* Kant considers the role and status of final causes in human thought, and finds that these determine the ends of both practical reason and the creations (e.g. in art) of the imagination. Although Kant claims that in the natural world the final cause 'cannot be deduced from any data of experience as a theoretical criterion of nature, nor can it be applied to know nature', the living organism must – since it has an 'indescribably wise organization'¹ – nonetheless be conceived as something with intrinsic not extrinsic (mechanical) finality. With the introduction of the notion of final cause – i.e. teleology – a new kind of unity enters into the Kantian system. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* the concept of unity is for the most part considered as the intrinsic feature of self-consciousness (thus as *a priori*), and therefore independently of the idea of an end that unfolds through time. In Kant's third *Critique* unity – e.g. the unity of a living organism or an idea of the imagination – is fulfilled only through time, for it is determined by a final cause whose realization requires an entity's remaining itself (i.e. identical) through change (i.e. difference). Such unity can only be conceived *a posteriori*; thus as unity within multiplicity.

In Hegel we see the attempt to know the relation between the unity which manifests in pure thought (whether in the simple $I = I$ or in the completed vision of the unfolding Absolute Idea) and the unity of the organism conceived in its immanence, whether as a living being, a society/culture or human self-consciousness understood as a historical sequence of different forms (e.g. the monk, the artist, the priest...) which metamorphose into one another in the fulfilment of a single end. In the simplest terms Hegel's aim is thus to understand the relation, which Kant thought to be unknowable, between unity discovered within pure thought, and the unity that manifests in the experienced empirical world. To this extent Hegel aims at advancing and synthesizing central ideas of Kant's first and third *Critiques*.² His attempt takes several different forms, some of which are more successful than others. That made in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*³ will now be discussed briefly, after which follows the detailed discussion of Hegel's conception of the self and the subject-object relation in the *Science of Logic*, where further aspects of his critique of Kant will be presented.

2.1 Kant and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*

In his *Phenomenology* Hegel tries to show how a completed logic of philosophical categories – one in which the thing-in-itself, eventually the Absolute Idea of the *Logic*, is discovered within thought (i.e. in and for me) and shown to be the ultimate constitutive condition of existence – presupposes an evolution of the self through a necessary sequence of what he calls 'forms of consciousness' [*Gestalten des Bewu[beta]tseins*]. A form of consciousness is effectively a way in which the self conceives and experiences itself and its world, and in the sequence of forms that constitute the *Phenomenology* the contradictions and limits present in any one form (which are embedded in the way it grasps its object) are overcome by its successor.⁴ Thus the transition from the most basic form, *sense certainty*, to that of *perception* sees the immediacy with which the self grasps sensory content – i.e. *this* something is *here* and *now* and real in its immediacy... – replaced by a conception of the object as a thing (the One, or subject term) with properties (the Many, or its predicates) that is not only here now, but also endures through time and change (i.e. it is capable of being *there then*). In *sense-certainty* we encounter a worldview whose content is an immediate universal (*here, now, I*), which is replaced in *perception* by a mediated universal – here the One, an individual such as a table, is mediated by its many properties or sensuous universals, e.g. it has four legs, is flat...etc.

In the mediated universal we now have a new tension between the subject term and the properties that it unifies – i.e. is the object one (e.g. *a table*) or many (its properties)? This tension is partially resolved in the idea of a law of nature (discovered by the *understanding*), an ostensibly stable reality or essence underlying the appearances, i.e. a supersensuous and supposedly unconditioned universal such as the law of gravity. Here we have an inverted world in which reality, having initially been conceived in *sense-certainty* as the world of immediate sensory appearances, is now thought of as a realm of supersensible laws, an inner reality hidden from the senses. We thus encounter another tension, between essence (law) and appearance (its instances), which Hegel resolves in the form of consciousness called *self-consciousness*. It is only in self-consciousness that the mutual externality of subject and predicate (one and many) and of essence and appearance (inner and outer) is overcome.

In *self-consciousness*, the subject makes itself and not an external object or a law of nature into its object and so has both a) itself as predicate (I am I) and b) its appearance for its essence (i.e. there is nothing underlying the 'I'). (Only an individual can say 'I', yet the 'I' itself is both completely universal, and also realized in a particular human being⁵.) In the discovery of the logic of the self and self-consciousness Hegel thus claims to have found the key for grasping those necessary relations between the categories in which the contradictions inherent in the categorial schemas of *sense-certainty*, *perception* and the *understanding* are overcome.⁶ (How this is achieved is made explicit in the *Science of Logic*. See chapter 3.) However, the actualization of *self-consciousness*, whose genesis occurs only in a social context for Hegel (i.e. the self I encounter as object is initially another self-consciousness⁷), is just the beginning of the self's path towards self-knowledge, which Hegel then traces through many more forms of consciousness – now mostly embedded in specific forms of social framework – before *absolute knowing* (i.e. spirit that knows itself as spirit – see the final paragraph of the *Phenomenology*) is realized.

The overall aim of the *Phenomenology* is thus to reveal each of the main forms of consciousness through which the self passes as it transforms substance (the world) into subject (itself), until the point is reached where all of reality is found to lie within it as its own self-externalization and so all dualism is overcome. The later chapters of the *Phenomenology* will not be considered here, since the aim is to examine the implicit critique of Kant found in some of its earlier ones. Here reasons will already be discovered for being sceptical about the realization of absolute knowing as conceived by Hegel.

It was demonstrated that a crucial aspect of the success of Kant's argument in the first *Critique* is his argument that the transcendental ground of sensibility cannot be understood, and that the sensible element of the object of experience is consequently subjective.⁸ It is important for Kant, in other words, that a true understanding of the relations between his four faculties – which together (with the exception of reason) give us the object of experience – cannot be achieved. This was hence the challenge that he unwittingly set his successors: to transform his sceptical epistemology into an ontology.⁹ So does Hegel succeed in doing this?

A striking feature of the *Phenomenology* is that despite being concerned throughout with the realization of knowledge, it is at no point a text of epistemology in any conventional sense. In the early chapters especially – i.e. up to the discussion of *observing reason* – Hegel considers the different ways in which thinking consciousness categorizes or conceptualizes the world of the senses, and not the question of how this world, i.e. immediate sensory content, is itself constituted.¹⁰ He is thus not as interested in the question 'How are the intelligible and sensible elements of cognition actually united in the thinking process?' as in finding the only logically coherent way of conceiving the formal structure of the object – as, in the end, the Absolute Idea (see chapters 3–5). These two projects are obviously closely related: if we can discover the only logically possible way of conceiving the world, then this will help us to find the means of understanding how this logic can be realized in the world of the senses. However, they should not be conflated.

Hegel's critique of Kant's conception of the object is that it remains confined to the contradictory categorial schema of *perception*. This claim is obviously justified, at least for the first *Critique*, for Kant defines the object as 'that in which a manifold of intuitions is united by a concept' – i.e. the object is the one (the unity) in many (the sensory manifold). However, Kant's position is precisely the result of his scepticism, i.e. of his argument that the transcendental ground of the unity of the concept and sensory intuition cannot be known, and Hegel only partially overcomes this scepticism, as the following argument demonstrates:

- (i) According to Kant, the unity conferred on the manifold by the concept cannot be shown to be intrinsic to the object, because it depends upon the transcendental unity of apperception – i.e. the 'I think' that is a condition of the possibility of representing an object and so thinking a concept. This 'I think' confers extrinsic unity upon the manifold of perception.
- (ii) Kant thus implicitly conceives the way in which unity arises dualistically: two things (subject and manifold) come together and a derivative, third thing, is produced – i.e. the experienced object.

- (iii) Against this Hegel argues that the 'I think' can never be conceived dualistically. Since unity is intrinsic to it (see chapter 3), it cannot be conceived as an element of a synthesis. It is the condition of the possibility of an element's being *an* element. (Hegel's argument is thus anti-atomistic.)
- (iv) From (iii) it follows that the unity conferred upon a manifold by the 'I think' cannot be extrinsic to the manifold. (This follows from a) the fact that the manifold actually has unity, and b) the necessity that this unity should come from a subject that cannot have anything external to it.) This unity is thus presupposed rather than created by consciousness and so must be intrinsic to the object itself – albeit to an object that has the transcendental subject as the true ground of its being.¹¹ (The implications of this in Hegel are considered in chapters 3–5.)
- (v) From (iv) it follows that the transcendental subject must be present in the manifold. But this is the same as saying that the manifold is no true manifold, but rather implicitly a unity. The subject 'flower', as an object of consciousness and predicate of the 'I think', gains its unity as a flower only by participating in the unity conferred by the transcendental unity of apperception.

The argument up to now has shown that subject-and-object and unity-and-manifoldness cannot be held apart from one another, and that Kant's dualistic way of conceiving the subject-manifold relation fails. However, to have discovered that unity must be intrinsic to the manifold, is not yet to know how, concretely, it is realized in it. There are passages in Hegel where it appears to follow from his arguments that human thought creates the world of the senses. At other points he admits that we receive sensory content passively; that it is the given with which thought plays and is itself transcendently constituted from beyond human consciousness.¹² If the latter is the case, then the realization of Hegelian logic cannot yet be absolute knowledge – i.e. knowledge of the unity of the infinite and the finite. It can at best be knowledge of the formal or speculative character of this unity.

To see how exactly Hegel conceives sensibility and sensation, aspects of his philosophies of nature and anthropology have to be considered, and this is done in chapters 4 to 6. There it is shown in detail how Hegel failed to appreciate the force of Kant's scepticism. (The main argument is that Hegel at times considers the fruits of sensibility and sensation as empirically real in an epistemologically unproblematic way where, as a Kantian, he should have considered them to be transcendently ideal.¹³)

In the *Phenomenology*, then, Hegel shows that Kant's conception of the object is incoherent, but because he does not show how the appearances are themselves constituted – he merely gives us logical guidelines (in the discussion of *force and the understanding* and *self-consciousness*) for doing so – it could be argued that he does not successfully overcome the form of consciousness of *perception*. That is, he offers no answer to the question: what constitutes the manifold in its sensory (as opposed to its conceptual) character? (Hegel cannot answer that it is thought that does so, because at no point in the *Phenomenology* is thought or the self conceived as the creator of the sensory world – though this idea is implicit in Hegel's system – see chapter 4. From *sense-certainty* onwards Hegel considers how thought responds to what is immediately given to it through the senses.)

In his exposition of the unfolding series of *forms of consciousness*, Hegel treats the sensory world as an obedient handmaiden of reason which is formed and disciplined

time and again by thought, and then eventually discarded once it has played its role in the awakening of the self to knowledge of its true, spiritual nature. He thus never fully considers the origin of the 'windows of the soul' in the *Phenomenology*, but, like the Stoics whom he criticizes, withdraws into the inner regions of the self in order to rest, ultimately, in the activity of thinking the unity of reality. Yet the victory of thinking over its most basic concepts, glorious though it might be, is not yet a victory over being.

It was claimed at the beginning of this chapter that Hegel attempts to unify and extend the results of Kant's first and third *Critiques*. Excepting the empirical shortcomings that have been discussed, the *Phenomenology* considered as a whole demonstrates this thesis very clearly. For in the early chapters of the work especially Hegel treats the most important questions of Kant's first *Critique* – the nature of the self and self-consciousness, of space and time, of the status of *a priori* categories and knowledge, of the relation between reason and the understanding etc. – in a form that is clearly inspired by central ideas of the third *Critique* – especially those concerning the teleological character of living organisms and of thought.

Thus for example self-consciousness is considered both speculatively and in teleological and historical (thus genetic) terms. Hegel's speculative discussion demonstrates the logical need for the subject to take the object into it in the realization of the self's infinite nature.¹⁴ Yet how this is achieved historically is demonstrated through the sequence of unfolding forms of self-consciousness, in which many aspects of the self's immanence – e.g. different, historically-embedded, forms of life – are considered. Hegel thus sees the self as both *a priori* and as a living organism.¹⁵ The categories (including space and time) are also considered by Hegel in this twofold way. The dialectic of One and Many, for example, is considered both in purely *a priori* terms and in relation to the sequence of forms of consciousness – specifically in the *Perception* chapter where the tension between them manifests as the opposition between the thing and its properties.

It should be noted that many of the unresolved questions of Hegel's *Phenomenology* are considered in some detail in the different parts of his *Encyclopaedia* as well as in the *Science of Logic*. Here we also find further implicit (and sometimes explicit) criticism of Kant, as I will show.

Concerning the Kant-Hegel relation, the following can be said at this point:

- 1 Hegel successfully criticizes Kant's conception of the object by showing that its unity as an individual (i.e. as a particular synthesis of a concept and a sensory manifold within self-consciousness) must be intrinsic to it. This has implications that Hegel exploits more fully in the *Science of Logic* – particularly in his dialectic of the universal, particular and individual.
- 2 Despite his powerful critique of certain elements of Kant's empiricism, Hegel does not successfully show how the knowledge attained by reason is related to that of the understanding. Reason grandiosely thinks its object into an absolute unity, while the understanding remains more humbly constrained by the irreducibility of sense-impressions. Until an ontology is discovered which is able to relate concepts and sense-impressions directly within a single explanatory framework, Kant's thing-in-itself must remain concealed behind the veil of sensibility, and the fruits of reason must remain an unfulfilled promise.

Notes

- 1 *Critique of Judgement* §82 (A378, B382); i.e. Meredith translation II, p. 88; AA V, p. 426.
- 2 In his *The Discovery of the Mind* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1980), vol. 1, Walter Kaufmann claims that Hegel's thought is a failed attempt to unite the discoveries of Kant and Goethe. The simple idea here is that Hegel unites transcendental philosophy (Kant) with a monistic conception of the organism (Goethe) – the outcome being absolute idealism. Though there is clearly some truth to this point, both Kant and Goethe were far more sensitive to empirical constraints than was Hegel, as will become ever more evident as this book progresses. A better candidate for the mantle of synthesizer of Idealist transcendentalism with Goetheanism is Steiner, as will be demonstrated. His early writings both a) focus on the epistemological implications of Goethe's phenomenological understanding of nature, and b) are inspired by German Idealist thought – particularly that of Fichte.
- 3 Hereafter the *Phenomenology*.
- 4 It is important to realize that the self is already present from the 'Sense Certainty' chapter of the *Phenomenology*, since every form of consciousness is a form of self-consciousness. This point becomes much easier to understand when the 'Phenomenology of Spirit' in the third part of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* is considered. Here the 'Phenomenology' follows the 'Anthropology', in which Hegel considers the natural, feeling and actual souls. (It will be argued in chapter 6 that Hegel does not consider these in explicitly ontological terms – hence the heading 'Anthropology'.) The beginning of the 'Phenomenology' is marked by the appearance of the 'I': '... das Ich ist der durch die Naturseele [i.e. the non self-conscious soul] schlagende und ihre Natürlichkeit verzehrende Blitz' (*Encyclopaedia* §412, Zusatz: i.e. *Werke* 10: 198; *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 152; *Glockner* 10: 254). Once the I appears, it becomes the motor of its own spiritual development – i.e. the creator of its many different worlds in its search for self-knowledge.
- 5 It will be shown below that Hegel's sublation (*Aufhebung*) of the universal-particular opposition, whilst logically profound, remains ontologically underdetermined. I hope to outline conditions of its ontological realization.
- 6 See also *Phenomenology* §167 (i.e. Miller trans., henceforth 'Miller P'), p. 104f (the division into numbered sections (§§) is found only in the Miller translation); *Werke* 3: 82f; *Glockner*, 2: 81f.). Hegel's arguments in the *Science of Logic* follow the same basic pattern as those of the early chapters – here briefly sketched – of the *Phenomenology*, though with important differences as will be demonstrated.
- 7 See the famous dialectic of lordship and bondage (Miller P, pp. 111f; *Werke* 3: 145f; *Glockner*, 2: 148f).
- 8 See e.g. CPR A393.
- 9 Even sceptical epistemologies rely on an ontology – thus in Kant's thought the *representation* is ontologically basic. However, Kant's conception of the representation is one that he allies with *thinking* rather than with *being*.
- 10 Since Hegel recognizes that sensory content is passively encountered, the question of its true origin must have been a live issue for him.
- 11 Hegel thinks that this truth is already implicit in the idea of a law of nature, for the latter is the outcome of the attempt to discover the unity intrinsic to phenomena. In recognizing the lawfulness of nature, one implicitly recognizes it to be a unified whole. This notion only becomes explicit when it is seen that the law is itself a creation of the thinking subject.
- 12 These will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

- 13 The important point here is that it will be argued that sensibility must be grasped as something actively constituted, i.e. that it expresses an ontology that mediates between pure thought and the physical world, an ontology undiscovered by Hegel.
- 14 See *Phenomenology* §788 to the end (Miller P., p. 589f; *Werke* 3: 575f; Glock, 2: 602f). Speculative treatments of the self are also scattered throughout the *Phenomenology*.
- 15 It will be shown in chapters 5 and 6 in particular that Hegel cannot reconcile these.

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Chapter 3

Hegel's Logic and the Self

If the *Phenomenology of Spirit* represents the steps within the Hegelian system leading to the altar of initiation, the *Science of Logic*¹ is our participation in the mysteries themselves.² For the *Logic* unfolds as a single living organism of pure thought in which consciousness, freed entirely from the world of the senses, treads the path of knowledge which is the unfolding of the Absolute Idea. Like the *Phenomenology*, then, Hegel's *Logic* unfolds like a living being, maintaining throughout a unity in the multiplicity of moments through which it passes. But whereas in the *Phenomenology* the organism whose growth, ripening and maturity is described is self-consciousness – the 'I' or self is planted like a seed into the sensory world of sense-certainty and grows through a rich organ schema (the many forms of consciousness) until it achieves the condition of absolute knowledge at the end of the *Phenomenology* –, in the *Logic* it is the Idea itself whose organic structure is laid bare. Corresponding to the *Phenomenology*'s forms of consciousness are thus the basic categories of thought and philosophy – being, becoming, space, time, essence, appearance, cause, effect, subject, object, idea... etc. –, the main moments of whose relations to one another Hegel attempts to present using the dialectical method.

The Idea hence stands to the *Science of Logic* as the form of self-consciousness stands to the *Phenomenology*. The *Phenomenology*, however, is a presupposition of the *Logic*, since the *Logic* unfolds in its entirety within the form of consciousness reached in the *Phenomenology* only at its very end, i.e. in absolute knowing. (Here a distinction needs to be made between the *Phenomenology* as a work of philosophy, i.e. the perspective of the phenomenologist who must already have reached absolute knowing to be able to pen his text, and the consciousness whose experiences this text describes. Only when these experiences have been passed through – which is achieved by humanity historically – can the *Phenomenology* itself become a possibility.) Phenomenology and logic are thus supposed to occupy different positions in a circle: the *Phenomenology* leads us to that form of knowing, Hegelian logic, in which we participate in the absolute subject's (or God's) nature. This subject, however, is itself conceived – in the *Encyclopaedia* – as in some form the origin of the empirical world from which we are delivered at the end of the *Phenomenology*.³

The concern of this and the next two chapters is to understand how Hegel conceives the subject-object relation in the *Science of Logic*. This chapter begins with the question: what is Hegelian logic? It focuses on how Hegel conceives the relation between logic and a) language, b) metaphysics and c) ontology. Throughout, the dialogue with Kant is continued. Having established that Hegel conceives logic as encompassing both metaphysics and ontology, I turn to a detailed discussion of Hegel's logical conception of the self and of subjectivity. This is drawn from the Subjectivity and Cognition sections of Hegel's *Logic of the Concept*. Chapter 4 then

considers the objectivity section of the *Logic* – which comprises three categories: mechanism, chemism and teleology – and exposes shortcomings in Hegel's conception of the logic-ontology relation. Here a line is also drawn to Hegel's philosophy of nature. Chapter 5 continues the discussion of the logic-ontology relation but in the context of the Idea. Hegel's conception of life – the Idea in its immediacy – is given the most detailed consideration and the thesis is advanced that this category marks a decisive limit of Hegel's system. It is here that the failure to unify transcendentalism and dialectic becomes most obvious. I then criticize Hegel's conception of the Absolute Idea before closing the discussion of the *Logic* by summarizing the main contradictions of his position.

The main conclusions I defend in the discussion of the *Logic of the concept* are:

- (i) That Hegel conceives the subject-object opposition inadequately in the *Logic*. This inadequacy has two forms: a) the position of the self in the unfolding of Hegel's argument; b) its ambiguous ontological status.
- (ii) That in his consideration of objectivity Hegel does not adequately distinguish the logic of the object from the object itself, which results in an ambiguous conception of the logic-ontology relation. The ground of this ambiguity will be shown to be a) an inadequate conception of sensibility, and b) an ontologically under-determined and logically incomplete conception of life.
- (iii) It follows from Hegel's own claims about the nature of the syllogism in the *Logic* that every true (and so rational) judgement should be capable of being derived from its unconditioned source. It will be argued that Hegel's system could not fulfil this ideal, especially for propositions that concern the relation between mind or soul and body.
- (iv) That Hegel presents an inadequate conception of the soul as the link between body and spirit in his discussion of the Idea (specifically of life and cognition). The place of sensibility in his argument will be shown to be the main location of this failing.
- (v) That Hegel presents an inadequate concept of the Absolute Idea. Specifically, it will be argued that Hegel's account of the relation of cognition to volition is unsatisfactory, and that it founders – once again – on the absence of a coherent conception of the relations between body, soul and spirit.

It might seem from these points as though this discussion of the *Logic of the Concept* will be laden with negative arguments. This is not the case, however, since the criticisms made are part of an attempt to build on Hegel's positive discoveries. Indeed it is the desire to see some of his aims and conclusions better realized than Hegel himself managed that motivates my approach.

3.1 What is Hegelian Logic?

In the first preface to the *Logic* (1812) Hegel states that a culture's metaphysics is the highest expression of its spiritual potential: 'An educated people without metaphysics' ... is like 'an otherwise richly decorated temple without its inner sanctuary [*Allerheiligstes*]'.⁴ This potential itself lies buried, for him, within the structures and

content of the language spoken in a culture, and awaits the philosopher to bring it into the light of self-consciousness. The seeds of metaphysics – words such as being, thought, universal, particular, subject, object, freedom... – are not planted by the philosopher, since they already have roots in ordinary language and the social institutions through which this language lives. The philosopher's task is to nurture them into a systematic whole by discovering the implicit relations between them and the means of conceiving them as a living unity. (For Hegel the philosopher hence has no need of a technical vocabulary.) Hegel's *Science of Logic* is his attempt to fulfil this ideal of revealing the internal logic of the spoken word, the *logos*.⁵

Hegel thus attempts a complete unification of metaphysics and logic. But what is really meant by this? A brief consideration of Kant's view of logic will help to make it clearer. As already stated, Kant makes a distinction in the *Critique of Pure Reason* between general and transcendental logic. Transcendental logic considers the *a priori* conditions of conceiving and experiencing objects. Its subject-matter is hence the philosophical categories – substance, relation, necessity, cause-effect... – which as a collective unity constitute the logical framework within which the experience of objects takes place and which are concretely actualized by sensory intuitions. (Thus 'Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind'.⁶) General logic, on the other hand, is for Kant the discipline more traditionally called logic. It deals with forms of valid reasoning (in particular the syllogism) and so is not concerned with the conditions of experience and objectivity (this is the business of understanding) but with the relations between and the formal structures of judgements in which objects are referred to (which is the subject matter of reason).⁷

Kant's main reason for holding transcendental and general logic apart is his already-discussed claim that the categories of transcendental logic gain their content in relation to the sensory world only. (This thesis is explained in his discussion of the schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding in particular. See chapter 1.) In contrast to this the forms of reasoning are valid *a priori*. The unity conferred by the understanding, for example, is unity of *a sensory plurality*, whereas the syllogism 'All As are B, some As are C, therefore some Bs are C' (e.g. 'All humans are mortal, some humans are male, therefore some mortals are male') is, for Kant, valid purely formally, though the truth of its conclusion in any particular instance ('Some Bs are C') rests on the truth of its premises, e.g. on its being true that all humans are mortal and some humans are male. Now it has already been shown that Kant conceived the ends of reason to be unattainable (see chapter 1). What this means for general logic is that the ultimate ground of all judgements and syllogisms cannot be known. If it were known, this would constitute knowledge of the true relations between the self (the inner origin of thought), the world (encountered as something external to the individual) and God (the transcendental origin of both the self and the world) – i.e. knowledge of unconditional premises that are capable of conditioning and so guaranteeing the truth of all syllogistic conclusions.

For Kant such an unconditioned ground of thought would have to be not only a perfect unity of reason, but one that encompassed the understanding and sensibility too. Given the impossibility of discovering such a unity, no premise or conclusion of a syllogism can ever be claimed as true in an unconditional sense for Kant.⁸

The crucial points of Kant's argument for this discussion of the relation between metaphysics and logic are thus the following:

- 1 There is no intrinsic relation between the categories that constitute the internal logic of the object (such as unity, substance, cause-effect...) and the different forms of syllogism – for Kant the categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive syllogisms. This is a doctrine that, I shall argue, Hegel successfully refutes.
- 2 A satisfactory unification of metaphysics and logic would require one's being able to relate every judgement of the understanding directly to the unconditioned ground of judgement that is its ultimate origin. However, since the transcendental ground of the unity of sensibility and the understanding cannot be known, such a unification is impossible.
- 3 For Kant, the subject-predicate and so also the substance-property relation could never be satisfactorily understood. (This claim is of course implicit in the idea that the 'thing-in-itself' is unknowable.)

Thus we see that Kant already attempts to unite metaphysics and logic, but only in a preliminary way, since he still distinguishes general from transcendental logic. Hegel takes a significant step beyond this. In the sections of the *Logic of the Concept* entitled 'Subjectivity' and 'Objectivity' he attempts to unite general and transcendental logic by showing a) how the judgement develops into the syllogism, and b) how the syllogism develops into the concept of the object.⁹ (The first of these amounts to the demonstration of how the categories of the understanding develop into those of reason. The syllogism thus describes the *form* of the dialectical development of categories which transforms them from categories of the understanding into categories of reason – i.e. which gives them rationality.) Hegel's argument builds on his dialectical consideration of the concept, which he conceives as having three moments: universality, particularity and, the mediated unity of these, individuality. The concept on its own has universality, in a judgement it is particularized (i.e. a subject term, e.g. 'tree', acquires content as a particular when a predicate, e.g. 'has green leaves', is added to it) and in the syllogism individualized (i.e. its differences are reunited.) The fully individualized concept (given expression for Hegel through the disjunctive syllogism) becomes the object.

Thus whereas Kant conceived the syllogism to be 'nothing but a judgement mediated by the subsumption of its condition under a universal rule (the major premise)',¹⁰ for Hegel the syllogism is the form in which the rational is articulated. Given that the notion of the syllogism passes into that of the object, this is supposed to be the demonstration that the concept of the object (in contrast to previous categories of the *Logic* such as the 'essence', the 'thing') is rational and objective and not, as for Kant, subjective – i.e. not simply the outcome of unifying a sensory manifold through the concepts and categories employed in making a judgement. Having demonstrated that the concept of the object develops out of the syllogism, Hegel goes on to argue that the idea (which occupies the place in Hegel of Kant's unconditioned ground of all thought) develops out of the concept of the object. This obviously takes Kant's claim that objectivity has its formal ground in the transcendental unity of apperception one decisive step further: Hegel argues that the idea, the fruit of his attempt to conceive the unity of subject and object, is ultimately the true nature of the object.

In brief, then, Hegel argues against the separation of transcendental and general logic by arguing that, logically speaking, there is a) no concept without a judgement

(which Kant could agree with), b) no judgement without a syllogism, c) no syllogism without the object, and ultimately d) no object without the idea or the unity of concept and object. Each term of his dialectic is thus contained within its successor until the absolute ground that contains them all is reached.

His attempt to unify transcendental logic, general logic and metaphysics under the heading 'logic' of course implies that Hegel imagined himself to have answered all of the basic questions of metaphysics in his *Science of Logic*, including the nature of freedom, God, the thinking-being relation etc... The argument as this and the next two chapters unfold will be that Hegel provides important logical elements of an answer to these questions, but that he is unable to realize these ontologically. The consequence of this is that Hegel ends up not being able to answer satisfactorily any of the metaphysical questions addressed in his text.

Before the relation of Hegel's logic to questions of ontology is considered, one further point should be made about his view of the relation between logic and metaphysics. It is surely fair to say that the most important questions of logic are those concerning the relation between the subject and the predicate of a sentence, for they raise questions about the nature of articles, about the status of the 'is' of predication and its relation to the 'is' of both existence and identity, about relations and universals. If we consider that Hegel accepts (and of course extends) the Kantian claim that the 'I think' must be able to accompany every representation, then the question of the subject-predicate relation now has the following two components:

- 1 It is the question of the relation between the 'I think' as subject and any judgement that it conceives – thus e.g. 'I think: Socrates is a mortal and a philosopher'. It is thus first of all the question: what is implied by the fact that everything within my world is a predicate of my subject?
- 2 It is the question of the relation between the subject and predicate of a judgement itself – i.e. both a) How can a subject be identical with its predicate (as is implied by the 'is' of predication)? and b), given the omnipresence of the 'I think' and the implicit identity of subject and predicate, How can I as subject be identical with the whole world as predicate (which is, again, implied by the 'is' of predication)?¹¹

In so far as Hegel's *Logic* aims at answering the questions of metaphysics, then, it can – and the *Logic of the Concept* especially – be seen as centred around one main question: What are the conditions of a subject's being identical with its predicate or, what for Hegel amounts to the same question, of a substance's being identical with its properties? His answer is that this identity of subject and predicate (of identity and difference) is possible only on the assumption of a genuine unity of them, which he names the Absolute Idea. In this Absolute Idea the tension encountered in the ordinary judgement in which subject and predicate are held apart is overcome. The unity of subject and predicate in the Absolute Idea (i.e. self-thinking thought – see *Enc. Logic* §236) is intended by Hegel to be conceived as a fully ontological claim, which I will criticize.¹²

To summarize this discussion, then:

- (i) Hegel attempts a complete unification of logic and metaphysics and so attempts to discover the unconditioned ground of every proposition.

- (ii) Kant held transcendental and general logic apart because he did not think this unconditioned ground could be known. Hegel attempts to unite them by considering both the categories of the understanding (i.e. of transcendental logic) and those of general logic (e.g. the syllogism) within a single, holistic dialectical framework. This framework has as its aim the discovery of the unconditioned ground of all being. Whether or not it succeeds will in part depend on whether Hegel's unconditioned is capable of being linked causally with the empirical world.

The basic argument against Hegel will be that he does not satisfactorily address all of the reasons that Kant had for keeping transcendental and general logic distinct from one another.

It has now been mentioned on a few occasions that Hegel's philosophy is ontologically underdetermined and that it consequently fails to answer all of Kant's sceptical doubts. A few more words about this will lead nicely into the discussion of the *Logic of the Concept*.

What, then, is the relation between logic and ontology? Philosophical ontology tries to answer above all one question: 'In virtue of what do all things exist?', or 'What, if anything, has existence for its essence, and what follows from this for all other existing things?' Philosophical logic, on the other hand, can be said to have as its main question, 'What is the rational (i.e. what is thought?) and how is its internal structure embedded in the structure of language?' Now for Hegel the answers to these two questions must converge, for if we are able to know the truth about being, this must be through thinking, and likewise if we are to know the true nature of thinking (i.e. its being), this must be because thought participates in the true nature of being. The possibility of thought's being able to grasp the truth, in other words, rests on a convergence of being (or substance) and thinking (or subject). Unless this end is achieved, thought will never be able to justify its claims concerning the nature of what is.

Hegel's *Logic*, to the extent that it attempts to establish the identity of thinking and being, is therefore ontology. (As a result it begins with the category of Being and ends with that of the Absolute Idea or thought thinking itself in all of its determinations.) Now of course the *Logic* is only one part of Hegel's whole system. Whether or not and how its ontology of the Absolute Idea is basic in Hegel's system therefore depends upon the *Logic*'s relation to the system's other two main parts, the philosophies of nature and spirit. It will be argued, in chapter 6 in particular, that Hegel fails to harmonize the relations between these three areas of his thought, and that Hegel's absolute knowledge is biased in the direction of conceiving the realization of truth as a unity of thinking and being alone.¹³ The alternative considered will be inspired by the thought of Steiner.

From the Steinerian perspective, man's feeling and willing (or soul-like and bodily) natures are as fundamental as his thinking – Steiner's four-fold ontology attempts to make this idea philosophically and scientifically concrete. To understand the nature of being (i.e. to realize an internally coherent ontology), the unity of substance and subject has therefore to be achieved in the domain of man's feeling and willing as well as his thinking. (i.e. It is only the idea of such a unity that can be discovered within thought.) Once again, the notion of the passion, resurrection and ascension of Christ points the way here, for in the idea of the resur-

rection of matter we encounter the possibility of a truly immanent synthesis of subject and object (or spirit, soul and body).¹⁴ Symbolically, the vertical axis of the cross can be seen as representing the spiritual world (this is an idea – widespread in esoteric thinking – that we also encounter in Aristotle's association between man's thinking and his upright posture), the horizontal axis the physical (i.e. man's arms and hands are his most basic tools for expressing his will) and Christ's heart (the soul) suffers the tension and eventually mediates the relation between these. From this Christological perspective, then, being conceived through the eyes of a dialectic of spirit and matter far overreaches even the loftiest kind of human thinking.

The attainment of Hegel's absolute knowledge is of course a far more modest end than 'sitting at the right hand side of the father', but the idea of the latter promises – on some interpretations at least – a theoretically (and existentially!) more coherent and attractive synthesis of subject and object than is achieved in the *Logic*. Had Hegel achieved a genuine dialectic of form or spirit and matter (or concept and percept) in the *Logic*, he would have realized that no mere conceptual resolution of unresolved Kantian tensions can remove the irreducibly sensible from the sphere of reality. Such an insight would also have saved Hegel the scorn of commentators who find it little more than amusing that one of the greatest philosophers should have thought himself to be the vessel of ultimate truth.

Turning, then, to Hegel's *Logic* itself. A more complete critique would include discussions of the logics of *Being* and *Essence*. Although some of their discoveries will be referred to in the discussion, only a very brief statement of their basic argument – as a preparation for the consideration of the *Logic of the Concept* – is possible here. The *Logic of Being* considers three main categories, quality, quantity and, the unity of them, measure. About the categories of being in general the following can be said:

- (i) They have the surface character of immediacy. This means that their interdependence – for example the interdependence of the categories of quality and quantity – is not immediately obvious. (A parallel example of such immediacy in the *Phenomenology* is the categories of *sense-certainty* – I, here, now, then, there – which reflect the self's immediate relation to the sensory world.)
- (ii) Hegel makes the category of being his beginning because it is the most immediate and indeterminate category. As such it is supposed to presuppose nothing – at least (given that the whole *Phenomenology* is presupposed) in respect of the path of pure knowing which begins with the *Logic*. (This beginning will be considered in chapter 5.)
- (iii) The synthesizing category of the *Logic of Being* is that of measure. Measure Hegel calls the 'qualitative quantum'. Wherever qualities are evident in the world, they are realized in specific quantities and vice-versa. If the one is changed, so is the other. Hegel offers many examples to illustrate this thesis, both natural (e.g. the nature of organisms, light, heat....) and historical/cultural (the nature of a political system...). In all of them the basic thesis is the same: everything that exists (i.e. that falls under the determination of a category of being) has its true measure and this always has both a qualitative and a quantitative dimension.¹⁵

The *Logic of Essence* also has three main categories: essence, appearance and reality or actuality (*Wirklichkeit*). The main properties of the categories of essence are:

- (i) They do not have the surface character of immediacy, but are what Hegel calls reflected or mediated categories. They follow upon the categories of being as the response to the question: 'what is this measure that manifests as a unity of quality and quantity?', to which the general answer of the *Logic of Essence* is 'an essence' or 'something which is unchanging...etc.'. With this the categories of being acquire a relation to something underlying them – as appearances to an essence. A reflected category is thus one which has its ground in another, of which it is the reflection. Essence is a reflected category since it explicitly has its content in relation to what is other than essence, namely appearance. Appearance, likewise, has its ground in essence.
- (ii) The categories of the *Logic of Essence* are hence paradigmatically dualistic and thus also the categories in which the understanding is at home. They include identity and difference, the thing and its properties, form – matter (these are all categories of essence itself), form – content, whole – part, a force and its expression (these are categories of appearance), inner – outer, necessity – possibility, and cause – effect (which are categories of the synthesis of essence and appearance, reality or actuality). As the mediating categories of the *Logic*, the categories of Essence manifest the most explicit contradictions between categories.
- (iii) The categories developed under Reality or Actuality are the attempt to conceive being as a unity of essence and appearance – as a substance which remains itself in its accidents, as an essence which shines forth in its appearance...etc. In the thought of Spinoza (who is for Hegel an archetypal thinker of reflected categories) this substance or the Absolute is God conceived as the absolute object. The transition from the categories of essence to those of the Concept is best conceived as a defence of the thesis that this absolute object must be conceived as subject.

3.2 The Self in the *Logic of the Concept*

Whereas the categories of Being have the surface character of immediacy, and those of Essence are reflected or mediated, the basic categories of the Concept are supposed to achieve the unity of immediacy and mediation. For Hegel it is in the sphere of thought that this unity is achieved. Hence the title of this book. The category which ultimately achieves a fully mediated unity of immediacy and mediation is, for Hegel, that of the Absolute Idea. However, the basic duality through which the Absolute Idea is conceived is the subject-object opposition, which the *Logic of the Concept* hence has as its main theme. Hegel also calls this book the *Subjective Logic*. Both titles reflect its aim, which is to show how a self-necessitating substance can and must be conceived as subject, and so ultimately how reality (the objective) and thought (the subjective) are one.

The rest of this and the next two chapters consider certain crucial stages of Hegel's argument in the *Logic of the Concept*. The focus in the rest of this chapter is on the

logic of self-consciousness and on the categories of subjectivity. The first of these is actually presented not in the subjectivity section of the *Logic*, but under the category of cognition, which follows life in the idea section of Hegel's argument. For this discussion only, I do not follow the order of the *Logic's* own argument. In the subjectivity section itself Hegel considers the concept in its three moments: in its immediacy as the single concept, in its mediated form as the judgement and in its absolute form as the syllogism. The category of cognition will be considered further in chapter 5. I begin by quoting and analysing a passage in which Hegel defines self-consciousness. This and the conception of the Absolute associated with it are then criticized with the help of a comparison with Hegel's early *Differenzschrift*. From here I move to the subjectivity section proper.

How, then, does Hegel conceive self-consciousness in the *Logic*? The following passage neatly summarizes the answer to this question:¹⁶

But it is comical, this nature of self-consciousness: that I thinks itself, that I cannot be thought without its being I which thinks – something uncomfortable [Kant] and, as if this indicated an error, circular. This relation of I to itself is that in which the absolute nature of the self and the concept is revealed in immediate, empirical self-consciousness – revealed because self-consciousness is the existent, that is empirically perceptible pure concept, the absolute self-relation which in a distinguishing [or separating] act of judgement makes itself into its object and alone consists in making itself into a circle.¹⁷

Here Hegel makes the following claims for the nature of the self and self-consciousness:

- 1 The self must always presuppose itself in thinking itself.
- 2 Self-consciousness exhibits the absolute and eternal nature of the concept.
- 3 This absolute concept or self-consciousness is an empirically perceptible and so existent pure concept.
- 4 The absolute concept or self-consciousness is an absolute self-relation.
- 5 Self-consciousness is constituted through a separating act of judgement in which the self makes itself into its object.
- 6 The absolute concept or the self is the only entity whose nature is exhibited as possessing a circular logical structure.

What makes self-consciousness into that through which the absolute nature of the concept is revealed, is that its logical structure is that of an immediate synthesis of subject (the immediate) and object (the mediated). In the notion of a subject (the thinking self) which immediately and necessarily has itself for its object (the thought self), the tension that holds mutually opposed categories (i.e. those of *Essence*) is overcome. The subject is the object and the object is the subject. Another way of putting this is to say that since the 'I' is immediately self-reflexive or self-referential (when I say I, I refer to myself as subject only and so to nothing beyond this), it gains its content as a subject through a predicate which is identical with it: I am I, or as Fichte and Schelling put it, $I = I$.

Now the absolute subject considered as $I = I$ contains no differences within it. This is crucial, for it shows that one cannot derive the logic of the self by adding two distinct elements: a) the self as the subject of thought, and b) the self as the object of

thought, to get a third one, c) the self as the unity of subject and object. (In other words: the self as subject can only be a subject *as a self*, and thus as a unity of subject and object.) If self-consciousness were conceived as derivative in this sense, this would be like considering it as composed of two elements (or, to use a category of Being, two *ones*). However, this would take us back into the contradictory categorial schema of the one-many opposition – i.e. self-consciousness would be a one (a unity) that is many (i.e. that is constituted by synthesized elements). But self-consciousness is itself the ground of all unity within consciousness, as has already been seen in the discussion of Kant, and so cannot be explained by reference to prior elements.

Relative to the category of the absolute subject or the self, then, the categories of Being and Essence are abstract in Hegel's sense, since they manifest incomplete oppositions, whereas the category of the self is immediately an absolute unity of opposites – i.e. it only ever exists as such a unity.¹⁸ If we take the form-matter opposition of Essence as a contrasting case, we see that although interdependent, form and matter can still be distinguished, as when we say that mortar and bricks are the matter of the wall which is formed by the builder. (Of course these bricks can themselves be seen as form imposed on matter, but this gives us an endless regress of form-matter unities, and so logical incompleteness.¹⁹) The point about the self is that in manifesting an absolute unity of opposite terms, it halts any potential regress. This is what Hegel means when he says that the self alone has a necessarily circular structure: although we make a distinction between the self as the subject and as the object of thought, they are necessarily one and not in any way external to one another. Hence the relation between them is one of immediate (rather than mediated) circularity. (The categories of Essence are the obvious examples of mediated circular relations between categories – i.e. the relationship between the categories 'thing' and 'property' is circular since although apparently different, each is required to explain the other.)

As beyond the subject-object opposition, as necessarily self-identical, the self also has the attribute of being eternal. Had the logic of the self entailed a unity of distinct conceptual elements, it would not have been possible to say this, since the self would then have had an identity within difference. Every subject which unites (i.e. gives identity to) a set of differences (e.g. the concept plant gives identity to the manifold of percepts in which it is realized) is subject to the finitude of the sensory world, and so could not be eternal.²⁰ In lying beyond the subject-object distinction, however, the immediately self-reflexive self (Fichte's self-knowing God) must be eternal. (Coming-to-be and passing-away are of course also abstract categorial determinations for Hegel and so inapplicable to the absolute subject which, as *causa sui*, must be incapable of not existing.²¹)

Yet how can something be both eternal and, as Hegel claims, empirically perceptible? What Hegel really means in making this claim is that the concept of self immediately overcomes the opposition of the empirical and the non-empirical. We are used to calling the empirical that which is encountered within the horizon of sensory consciousness. In the case of self-consciousness, however, we are dealing with an object perceived by a subject which is immediately identical with the object – thus with a sense of the empirical and empirical perception which transcends the subject-object opposition.

The self is hence the concept of the concept or the subject thinking itself immediately as object, and thus it is absolute.²² This aspect of the self's logic makes out

what Hegel in the *Differenzschrift*²³ of 1801 calls the subjective subject-object unity – i.e. the unity of subject and object discovered within the logic of the first person pronoun.²⁴ This he distinguishes from its objective counterpart, the object of sense-experience. This object is also a subject-object unity, since its unity as an object is conferred by the subject term or concept which unifies the sensory manifold in which it is realized. Unlike the I, however, this subject-object unity is not absolute because it manifests the unresolved tensions intrinsic to the specific objectivity it exemplifies – the different forms (i.e. mechanical, chemical and teleological) are considered in chapter 4. (The relation between these two senses of subject-object unity is demonstrated by showing the dependence of an object of our experience upon the absolute identity of the thinking subject – which Kant already attempted to do by deriving the concept of the object in general from the ‘I think...’) In the *Differenzschrift* Hegel set the challenge of conceiving a unity of the subjective and the objective senses of the subject-object unity (of $I = I$ and $I \neq \text{not } I$, or of thinking and being). This unity would yield the true sense of the Absolute and not merely the subjective one of Fichte (the $I = I$). The *Logic of the Concept* is Hegel's attempt to meet this challenge.

The difference between the subjective and the objective senses of the subject-object unity can be represented with the help of a simple sentence as follows:

Subjective subject-object unity		Objective subject-object unity ²⁵	
	A.		B.
Sentence:	‘I think: [implicit]’		This rose has a beautiful flower.’
Logical status:	[Absolute]		Contradictory
Logical form:	$I = I$		$S \text{ is } P$ (or, taken together with A, $I \neq \text{not-}I$, or $I = S \text{ is } P$)
Ontology:	Pure concept		[Concept-percept unity]
Unity of A and B = the Absolute			

The brackets around the word ‘Absolute’ in column A point to a tension in Hegel's conception of the Absolute. In the quotation analysed above Hegel calls the self absolute, whereas already in the *Differenzschrift* he argues that a proper conception of the Absolute would be a synthesis of the subjective and objective senses of the subject-object unity. This raises the question: Can the $I = I$ alone be considered as absolute, or must the Absolute always be conceived as a unity of $I = I$ and $I \neq \text{not } I$? If the latter, then what status are we to accord the $I = I$ itself? What, in short, is the relation between the $I = I$ and the $I \neq \text{not-}I$? How is the I present in its other, and how is their mutual opposition overcome? I return to these questions shortly.

The brackets around the concept-percept unity in column B point less to a tension than a major shortcoming of Hegel's conception of the subject-object relation. This will be considered in further detail in chapters 4 to 6, but its relevance to the current discussion of the logic of subjectivity and of the $I - \text{not-}I$ relation makes it worth mentioning. If, as Hegel argues, the Absolute is to be conceived as a fully mediated unity of I and not-I, then the finitude of the empirical world, of the not-I, needs to be fully overcome. Given that the objective subject-object unity is inconceivable without

the perceptual component of experience, this would mean that the unity of the subjective and the objective subject-object unities would require a fully-mediated synthesis of the concept-percept duality. Yet what would this be? It will be argued below that Hegel cannot answer this question – owing chiefly to the position that sensibility occupies in the argument of the *Logic* – but that a philosophical interpretation of the concept of resurrection succeeds where Hegel fails.

Returning, then, to the I – not-I relation and the question of the Absolute. The I is absolute because it is a subject which has itself for its predicate and so lies beyond the subject-object opposition. From this the following conclusions can be drawn:

- (i) The not-I or the empirical world which the I encounters as its other cannot be external to the I.²⁶ As absolute the I must lie beyond the subject-object opposition and so be immanent in the not-I. (In the *Logic of Being* Hegel puts this by saying that the finite cannot be external to the infinite, but must be contained within it, since otherwise the infinite would not be infinite.) The objective subject-object unity thus cannot be distinct from the subjective one; the latter must be immanent in the former. (Another way of stating this is to point out that there is a contradiction in the equation $I = \text{not-I}$, since it is intrinsic to the I that it only ever equals itself.²⁷)
- (ii) This means that the self or I must be immanent in the world of material objectivity or of the senses. It means that, seen dialectically, the material or sensory world is itself self-conscious and infinite. (See also chapter 6.)
- (iii) In all cases except that of the I which has its predicate contained within the subject, a subject requires a predicate distinct from it to have content.²⁸ The reconciliation of I and not-I, however, would represent the overcoming of the difference between subject and predicate (an overcoming which is already implicit as a possibility in the contradiction of stating that one thing *is* another – on this see also the following section on the subjectivity section of the *Logic*).
- (iv) The difference between the I and the not-I hence presupposes an underlying identity of them, or of identity and difference. This also means that the difference between them is not real but only apparent, and that there is also only an apparent difference between the Absolute conceived as $I = I$ or as the unity of $I = I$ and $I = \text{not-I}$.
- (v) Given, then, that the difference between $I = I$ and the $I = \text{not-I}$ is – as far as the basic logic of reality goes – merely apparent, so must be all other differences including those between spirit and matter, mind and body... (This follows from the fact that the I is the ground of identity and so also of difference – i.e. of the identity of objective subject-object unities of the empirical world – and so that it must be the ground of all other identities and differences.)
- (vi) To overcome the merely apparent and to know the real (the ontologically fundamental), in other words, would be to reconcile the I and the not-I. In reality, then, I and not-I must be one. Such a reality would merit the name Absolute.
- (vii) This reconciliation of I and not-I – which the above dialectic demonstrates to be a constitutive logical possibility for any being which experiences an I – not-I or self-world division – can be conceived as a philosophical interpretation of the notion of resurrection.

These thoughts of course go in important respects beyond those of Hegel himself. Hegel thought philosophy alone to be capable of yielding knowledge of the Absolute, whereas the unity of I and not-I here sketched is ontologically far more ambitious. (It will be discussed further in chapter 7.) In so far, then, as this Absolute or identity of I and not-I remains an unactualized possibility, the self which would be actualized in a proper reconciliation with the world must still be transcendent.²⁹ Even though I may be capable of experiencing the unity of I and not-I within higher thought, I remain impotent as a creative self when it comes to the exteriority of the sensory world and my physical body. (I cannot even will my finger to grow another inch, let alone create a whole world out of the I.) This of course means that the extent of my self-knowledge – and so knowledge of the world – is, even as an initiate of Hegel's system, highly limited.

The detailed reasons why Hegel's account of the reconciliation of I = I and I = not-I falls short will be considered in the next two chapters. Here it is worth simply reiterating that the decisive question is Hegel's conception of the thought-sense relation. It was shown that from the Kantian perspective knowledge of the Absolute (or of the unity of his Ideas of Reason) would require knowing the transcendental ground of the unity of the understanding (as home of the 'I think') and sensibility, the two principle sources of our representations. Hegel, it will be argued, makes no real attempt to conceive this unity, with the result that he prematurely absolutizes man or, what amounts to the same thing, humanizes the Absolute.³⁰

What, then, is Hegel's conception of the self in the *Logic of the Concept*? What this discussion has shown is that the real answer to this question presupposes a fully worked out conception of the Absolute as the unity of the subjective and objective subject-object unities. To answer the question properly, in other words, Hegel's argument has to be considered as a whole. In presenting aspects of it in the above somewhat idiosyncratic form, the intention was a) to present the overall conceptual context into which the argument of the *Logic of the Concept* falls, b) to anticipate its major shortcoming, which is that Hegel's *Logic* fails to account for the logical significance of the object's sensory component, and finally c) to introduce the concept of resurrection as the placeholder for the notion of a fully ontological conception of a mediated subject-object unity. I turn now to a discussion of subjectivity as conceived in the *Logic* itself.

3.3 Concept, Judgement and Syllogism

The most important aspect of the Subjectivity section of Hegel's *Logic of the Concept* is without doubt its revolutionary treatment of the syllogism, for it is here that Hegel for the first time turns the dialectical process back upon itself in an attempt to answer the question 'What is thinking?' Here we thus see Hegel's effort to make thought think its own form as content, which amounts to the attempt to offer a dialectical statement of how the dialectical method itself works. The syllogism, however, forms the final section of the subjectivity discussion, which begins with the concept considered on its own, and passes from there to the judgement. In the following I will only state Hegel's account of each of the three moments of his argument very generally, with the odd example, and will orient my discussion in the direction of two

questions: a) What is Hegel's conception of dialectical thought? and b) What is the relation between the absolute subject, $I = I$, and the concept, judgement and syllogism?³¹

One of the major shortcomings of Kant's conception of the 'I think' is that he is unable to say how it differentiates into the twelve categories or predicates of the concept of the object which give order to our sensory experiences.³² This shortcoming Hegel tries to overcome speculatively. Thus whereas Kant simply postulates his list of twelve, Hegel attempts to derive his much more extensive set of categories in a single development which culminates in their unifying source.³³ The opening triplicity of the *Logic of the Concept* – that of the universal, particular and the synthesis of these, the individual – provides the key, when considered in relation to the judgement and the syllogism especially, to understanding how he attempts to do so.

The triplicity of universal, particular and individual takes many different forms in Hegel's system. However, four are of particular relevance to this book:

- (i) The form which Hegel develops through his consideration of the concept, the judgement and the syllogism. Here the universal is shown to contain the moments of both particularity and individuality in it.
- (ii) The form which applies strictly to the categories of the *Logic* itself.
- (iii) The form in which they apply to the self or I .
- (iv) The form which applies to Hegel's system taken as a whole. From the systematic perspective, the *Logic* plays the role of the universal, the philosophy of nature is the particular, and the philosophy of spirit is that in which they are united, the individual.

Given that the *Logic* is also the culmination of the philosophy of spirit, forms (ii) and (iv) are supposed to converge. That is: the *Logic* taken as a whole is the true individual or that in which the unity within multiplicity of the Absolute Idea is laid out. It will be shown in chapters 5 and 6 especially that Hegel fails to give a satisfactory account of this convergence. Here I concentrate on the first three forms.

The first form in which Hegel presents his triplicity is as a demonstration that the concept *as* concept (in the unfolding of Essence it has been merely implicit) contains all three moments – the universal, particular and individual – within it; indeed that containing these moments is what constitutes the category of the concept as such. What this means is that concepts (i.e. the determinations of thought conceived by a self-conscious thinker or $I = I$)³⁴ are always simultaneously universal, particular and individual.³⁵ How is this so? To take an example, the concept 'being' is a universal whose content is determined by the act of thinking it. Hegel calls it self-identical, which is simply another way of saying that it is conceived by a self-conscious individual.³⁶ 'Being' is, however, one category among many – that is: it is a particular universal and as such distinct from such categories as 'essence' or 'object'. (Its universality – the fact that it is self-identical – is hence simultaneously its particularity – the fact that it is one universal among many.³⁷) Yet dialectic shows that 'being' is intrinsically related to (or negatively reflected into) other categories – e.g. 'nothing' and 'something'. It is hence not an isolated element, but depends on other categories for its content.

The particularity of the universal is – as Hegel demonstrates – given expression through the judgement (the *Ur-teil*, or archetypal separation of an original unity), for

example of the form 'X is not Y'. X is the moment of self-identity, yet it *is* not-Y. It is self-identical, in other words, only in so far as it is different. (It will shortly be demonstrated that this does not apply to the I.) In the judgement we hence see the self-identity of the universal pass into its negation. By showing that e.g. the category 'part' is an empty notion without 'whole', we demonstrate that its self-identity is actually an identity within difference.³⁸ So what of the individual? The individual is supposed to capture the unity of the universal and the particular (i.e. the unity implicit in the copula that links them). In the case of the *Logic*, the individual is hence the whole unfolding series of categories unified in the one category in which all others are implicit, the Absolute Idea.

Whereas the particular takes the form in this section of the *Logic* of the judgement (i.e. the particularity of the universal is given through its being one concept and not another), the individual takes the form of the syllogism. In a judgement, subject and predicate are held apart yet also unified through a copula. In a syllogism, the mediating term is no longer simply the copula (e.g. *is*), but the subject or predicate of a judgement. In a judgement both subject and predicate simply have to be taken as given. In the syllogism they determine one another's places within a larger system. Take the following disjunctive syllogism:³⁹

- (i) All rational beings are either human beings or angels.
- (ii) Socrates is a rational being who is not an angel.
- (iii) Therefore Socrates is a human being.

Here the mediating term is 'rational being', which plays the role of a genus or universal that is unified in the disjunctive syllogism with both a) its species or particulars (human being and angel), and b) an individual instance of the species. The important point, then, is that rationality is not simply being presupposed here, but articulated in terms of the species to which it applies. The species, likewise, are not presupposed, but determined into their members. The conclusion of the syllogism is therefore neither that all rational beings are either humans or angels, nor that Socrates is a non-angelic rational being. It is that Socrates is a human being *because* he is rational, but not an angel.

The disjunctive syllogism comes at the end of Hegel's considerations as the only syllogism in which the separation of universal, particular and individual is overcome. It is overcome because in the disjunctive syllogism the genus or universal – in this example 'rational being' – is distributed into all of its species without remainder and so also into every instance of a single species. The genus or universal is hence fully unified with both the individual (the species) and the particular (the instances of the species). Here the genus ceases to be a mediating term linking species and individual but is determined as immediately present in both. This immediacy, for Hegel, establishes the unity of the individual and in doing so introduces the category of the object, since the object is always an individual in which universal and particular are given as an immediate and ostensibly independent unity. The categories of objectivity – mechanism, chemism and teleology – then see Hegel showing that the object itself, though it initially seems to be immediate and independent, is itself mediated by other, higher categories: those of the idea.

How might the self or I fit into this schema? In manifesting the absolute nature of the concept immediately, the I must be an individual which unites the universal and

the particular. This is clearly the case: when I say I, I mean this particular individual, me, yet I succeed only in saying something completely universal. The I thus immediately unites particular and universal – in this consists its absoluteness. (When God tells Moses that he is called ‘I am that I am’ in Exodus 3:14, he states this basic logic of the absolute subject or individual.⁴⁰) It has already been shown that the I cannot be split in any way. Even the not-I must hence have the I immanent in it. If this individuality of the I is translated into the discussion of the concept, judgement and syllogism, we get the following sequence:

- | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|--|------------------------|
| 1 | Concept | = | Universal = I am I (or I = I) | = [subjectivity] |
| 2 | Judgement | = | Particular = I am not-I | = [objectivity] |
| 3 | Syllogism | = | Individual = I am the unity of I and not-I | = [idea] ⁴¹ |

It has already been shown that 2., or I am not-I, is a contradiction. The I cannot be not-I. This means that the unity of ‘I am I’ and ‘I am not-I’ is simply ‘I am I’. This follows also from Hegel’s claim that the I or self-consciousness immediately presents the absolute nature of the concept in its individuality. (Of course the ordinary human condition is precisely the contradictory one, I am not-I. Indeed it is the unresolved oppositions of this condition – good versus evil, truth versus falsehood, knowledge versus ignorance etc. – that create the tension which leads to the search for self-knowledge and so the attempt, demonstrated by the logic of the syllogism to be a possibility, to overcome the I – not-I opposition.)

Aristotle defined the syllogism as ‘a logos in which certain things being stated, something other than what is posited follows of necessity from their being so’.⁴² The logic of the self is in this sense clearly not syllogistic, since it is immediately absolute, and as such requires no mediation. Mediation can only be necessary for beings which live in contradiction. As a criticism of Hegel when he says ‘everything is a syllogism’ (i.e. every identity is mediated), it can thus be replied that there is one notable exception: the I.⁴³ It is significant that Hegel does not actually consider the relation of the self to the syllogism in his discussion of subjectivity. This is a striking omission which Hegel does not make good when the self is discussed under the Idea.⁴⁴ If the position of absolute subjectivity in the syllogism is made more explicit, then we get, for example:

- 1 [I think]: All bodies are extended.
- 2 [I think]: All extended things have mass. Therefore,
- 3 [I think]: All bodies have mass.

The I think is, of course, implicit throughout this syllogism. In its judgements it appears in the form of the words ‘are’ and ‘have’. In the syllogism it takes the form of the mediating concept – i.e. being extended. But being extended (like every other mediating concept of a syllogism), as one of the determinations of the objective world, must itself have its ultimate ground in the I which as absolute identity can know no difference.⁴⁵ It might thus be said that it is by grace of the absolute identity implicit in each term of the syllogism that it can function as a syllogism (i.e. as a structure of thought which mediates identities and differences) at all. Syllogistic logic must hence have its ground in, but not itself be the ground of, the self. What,

then, is the kind of thinking by means of which the absolute unity of the I am reveals itself to consciousness? Surely the best answer to give here is that it is 'intellectual intuition' in the sense suggested by Kant and elaborated by Fichte and Schelling in application to knowledge of the Absolute: an act of immediate apprehension of absolute identity.⁴⁶

How, then, does the syllogism help to explain the dialectical method of thought? The crucial point about the syllogism is the role played by the middle term. The content of a concept, for Hegel, is determined by its relations to other concepts. These relations become more than arbitrary – i.e. acquire the status of knowledge – when they are shown to be necessary or rational; when it is shown that they can occupy one place only in a system without contradiction. Although it is in the end only the process of thinking the relevant concept itself which can determine this place, the logical structure of the process is, for Hegel, syllogistic. In it the middle term is the means whereby the differences between concepts are sublated. This is achieved because one member of the triad always sublates the opposition between the other two. This establishes the mediated identity of the middle term with its two extremes. (This sublation hence involves three main categories; it is triadic. Others can be introduced only in the context of a new threesome.)

Since for Hegel reasoning is syllogistic, if reason is to describe reality (at least reality which is manifested in the opposition of I and not-I), then reality must also have a syllogistic structure (i.e. have a middle term which unites its opposites). That reality does have such a structure is demonstrated by the immanent critique of the basic categories used to describe being through the *Logic* itself. For the *Logic* as a whole, the syllogistic character of reality is shown by the need to overcome the contradiction which separates subjectivity and objectivity through a middle term which sublates (i.e. both overcomes but also preserves) them both. For Hegel this category is the Absolute Idea.

If these reflections on the syllogism are related to the discussion of the unity of the subjective and objective senses of the subject-object unity, then it becomes clear that a proper unity of I and not-I, i.e. a completed syllogistic logic, would have to include demonstrations of how the empirical predicates that give content to the many nouns etc. of ordinary language are related to the I = I through which they are both a) mediated in their relations to one another, and then ultimately b) unified when spirit realizes self-knowledge through the philosophical system and ultimately through logic. It will be demonstrated below that although he attempts to, Hegel could not have realized such a logic, and that to do so fully would require conceiving a possible synthesis of dialectic and transcendental ontology – a synthesis fulfilled in the concept of resurrection.⁴⁷ In relation to Hegel's system as a whole, it will be shown that its basic opposition of logic and nature, which are supposed to be united by spirit as their middle term, is not overcome and so that this system does not achieve the logical closure Hegel sought.

Notes

- 1 Henceforth the *Logic*. In this discussion no distinction will be made between the Greater and Encyclopaedia logics.

- 2 In the preface to the *Science of Logic* Hegel says that the speculative is the mystical. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* likewise 'Speculative truth... means very much the same as what, in special connection to religious experience and doctrines used to be called mysticism' (§82 Zusatz). On mysticism in Hegel see also K. Comoth's 'Hegel's *Logik* und die spekulative Mystik' in *Hegel-Studien*, (1984).
- 3 Hegel spells out the circular form of his system in the *Encyclopaedia*, and it is during the discussion of aspects of it in chapters 5 and 6 that some of its internal contradictions will be outlined.
- 4 *Wissenschaft der Logik I* (=Werke 5), p. 14; *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), henceforth, 'Miller L', p. 25; Glock, 4: 14.
- 5 To the extent that the German language is in many ways the given of the Hegelian system, it can be seen as lying at its outer boundary. One of the conditions of Hegel's system's being complete is that German is the language in which the truth is capable of being realized; that it is the language of absolute being.
- 6 CPR A51.
- 7 In syllogisms used in our understanding of the natural world (for example in physics or mechanics...) it is hence the understanding that conceives the judgements or premises that are combined by reason in the generation of a rational conclusion. Kant gives the following example of such a syllogism: (i) Everything composite is alterable; (ii) All bodies are composite, therefore (iii) All bodies are alterable (CPR A330). Premises (i) and (ii) are given by the understanding in the form of judgements. Reason draws the conclusion that follows from them.
- 8 The paralogisms (i.e. fallacious syllogisms) of the *Critique* are attempts to discover such an unconditioned ground. These are transcendental paralogisms because their fallacies are not formal but follow from the necessary limits of human reason – specifically from the absence of objects to correspond to the Ideas of Reason. I shall agree with Hegel that the idea of an 'object of an idea of reason' is a misconceived one, but will argue against his claim to have discovered the unconditioned ground of all being.
- 9 His aim, as will be demonstrated, is to discover forms of both the syllogism and the object that meet the demand of realizing a true unity of the universal and the particular in the individual.
- 10 CPR A307.
- 11 There is, of course, an important school of thought which argues against conceiving the 'is' of predication as an 'is' of identity. The idea will hence be considered more carefully below.
- 12 There has been a tendency in research on Hegel to try to conceive his ontology (and particularly the Absolute Idea) in a minimalist sense – i.e. as something other than ultimately *absolute*. (Examples of this tendency include Michelet [see his *Das System der Philosophie als Exakter Wissenschaft*, p. 295], and N. Hartmann, as well as more recent Anglo-Saxon commentators who see the *Logic* as a conceptual project that does not ultimately make ontological demands on empirical reality.) I shall argue below that this tendency can find a motivation only in Hegel's failure to realize the aims of his system satisfactorily; it does not reflect Hegel's own intentions.
- 13 In Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, book X, the '*eudaimonic*' life is conceived in a twofold way: in the practical sphere as the life of the *phronimos* (the man who has cultivated the faculty of moral insight) and in the epistemic sphere as the life of *theoria* or contemplation of forms. Aristotle says that the latter is in the end man's highest end. Hegel's absolute knowledge can be seen as reflecting the same spiritual bias.
- 14 This sense of 'concrete' aims to be a unity of the Hegelian sense – i.e. the discovery of the fully mediated concept, and the Kantian sense – i.e. the realization of this concept in the sensory world.

- 15 A good example of this is the human body. This is one thing that has many parts, each of which has a different internal composition (e.g. the difference between a liver and a heart cell). The qualities of the body's parts (e.g. cell colour, organ texture...), are determined by different quantitative configurations of the basic building blocks of ordinary bodily matter – e.g. proteins, fats, carbohydrates... and at the more fundamental level, molecules and chemical elements (which are themselves distinguished quantitatively in atomic theory by the number of protons, neutrons and electrons in the atom – thus e.g. the number of neutrons in an atom is what distinguishes its different isotopes). What distinguishes all of these parts – and hence their qualities – are the fixed numerical ratios in which their basic components are combined. As a whole, then, the human body – conceived through the basic categories of being alone – is one complex unity of interdependent qualities and quantities that together determine its true measure.
- 16 My attention was drawn to this passage by Christian Iber in an unpublished paper that he delivered at the Freie Universität in Berlin in 1999 entitled '*In Zirkeln um das Selbstbewusstsein. Hegels Theorie der Subjektivität*'.
- 17 *WdL II (Werke 6)*, p. 490; Miller L, p. 777; Glock, 5: 266. My translation. In the original: 'Aber lächerlich ist es wohl, diese Natur des Selbstbewußtseins, daß Ich sich selbst denkt, daß Ich nicht gedacht werden kann, ohne daß es Ich ist, welches denkt – eine *Unbequemlichkeit* [Kant] und als etwas Fehlerhaftes einen Zirkel zu nennen, – ein Verhältnis, wodurch sich im unmittelbaren, empirischen Selbstbewußtsein die absolute, ewige Natur desselben und des Begriffs offenbart, deswegen offenbart, weil das Selbstbewußtsein eben der *daseiende*, also *empirisch wahrnehmbare*, reine Begriff, die absolute Beziehung auf sich selbst ist, welche als trennendes Urteil sich zum Gegenstande macht und allein das ist, sich zum Zirkel zu machen.'
- 18 This also means that the subject-object opposition is in an important sense not a genuine opposition (i.e. like those of *Essence*), since as soon as it is realized that the true subject is the 'I' (as it was up to a point by Kant already), it should also be realized that this I cannot have an object that is distinct from it. (The 'I' is, in other words, the true thing-in-itself.)
- 19 One might of course apply the categories of form and matter to the self, and say that an absolute form-matter unity is achieved in the I. This would be a relatively abstract statement, however, because the form-matter opposition gains its content through the fact that form is an active force imposed on passive matter, and so not identical with it. The concept of the object as an empirical phenomenon is quite different from that of matter, since every object is simultaneously a subject in which the subject determines its properties much as form determines matter. This will be discussed shortly.
- 20 It will be demonstrated in chapter 5 that Hegel's conception of the eternity of the self is ambiguous.
- 21 If the absolute subject were caused, it would not lie beyond the subject-object opposition, and so would not be absolute by definition.
- 22 See e.g. *WdL II*, p. 253; Miller L, p. 583; Glock, 5: 13f.
- 23 *Werke 2 (Jenaer Schriften)*; Glock, 1.
- 24 It is in his discussion of Fichte in particular that Hegel considers this unity.
- 25 As this table shows, the concept of the object already has the category of the self implicit in it, which is why Hegel considers objectivity as a category (or rather as a set of categories – i.e. the mechanical, chemical and teleological senses of objectivity) of the *Concept* – thus as a category directly conditioned by the absolute unity of the self.
- 26 That the I is the not-I Hegel puts by saying that the I 'is pure negativity or the dividing of itself', *Phenomenology (Werke 3)*: 583; Miller P, p. 799; Glock, 2: 611).
- 27 The concept of the Absolute Other is hence an abstraction, since this other is still *my* other, and in so far as this other is truly itself, it is I = I, which I also am.
- 28 This will be discussed further when the concept-judgement relation is considered.

- 29 See the Appendix for a diagrammatic sketch of the Steinerian conception of levels of the self which for man in his current stage of evolution are transcendent.
- 30 Here his conception of the Absolute as the eternal and the infinite can be distinguished from Aristotle's more substantial divine being, whose basic logical form is otherwise very similar – i.e. as noesis noeseos or a thinking upon thinking and so as an immediate subject-object unity. Aristotle argued not only that God's thinking must be much more sublime than that of man, but also that God is so powerful as to be the mover of the planetary spheres and, in general, the ontological ground of the whole cosmos. Where Aristotle falls short of the Hegelian perspective is that he cannot account for the relation of the infinite to the finite, since he does not conceive a possible reconciliation of them.
- 31 For a more detailed and very helpful discussion of the subjectivity section see G. Mure's *A Study of the Logic of Hegel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950). Mure makes particularly useful comparisons with Kant and Aristotle in his discussion of the syllogism.
- 32 These categories fall into four groups: 1. of Quantity: unity, plurality and totality; 2. of Quality: reality, negation, limitation; 3. of Relation: of inherence and subsistence (substance and accident), of causality and dependence (cause and effect), of community (reciprocity between agent and patient); 4. of Modality: possibility-impossibility, existence-non-existence, necessity-contingency. (CPR A80) The first two groups would fall under the categories of *Being* for Hegel, the second two would fall under *Essence*. Only the 'I think' in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the sensuous universal of the *Critique of Judgement* approach Hegel's notion of an absolute category.
- 33 As was shown above, Kant called the categories 'predicates of the concept of the object in general', which shows that he gave a logical priority to the subject-object opposition over all others in his considerations. Hegel continues (and of course significantly extends) this by making the subject-object opposition the main one of the final, and so logically most complete, book of the *Logic*.
- 34 The I = I has not yet entered the dialectic at this point. I shall argue in the forthcoming discussion of the *Idea*, however, that it should have and that Hegel's failure to recognize this points towards an ambiguity deeply embedded in his argument.
- 35 Particularity and individuality have at this point nothing to do with the realm of the senses, though the claim that concepts are always simultaneously universal, particular and individual applies to both sensory and supersensible concepts.
- 36 Only a determination of thought can be self-identical, since this self-identity is derived from the I, the ground of all thought. Its being self-identical thus means nothing more than that it is reflected in self-consciousness. Thus the concept 'being', for example, is or exists for self-consciousness.
- 37 See e.g. *Enc. Logic* §164.
- 38 Hegel distinguishes the judgement from the proposition. The latter 'contains a statement about the subject, which does not stand to it in any universal relationship, but expresses some single action, or some state, or the like...' (*Enc. Logic* §167). Most sentences of ordinary language express propositions rather than judgements. It is only judgements which are capable of yielding philosophical knowledge. Hegel considers a dialectical sequence of judgement forms beginning with those which recapitulate the basic form of the logic of being – i.e. in which the subject-predicate relation is only tenuous – and ending with forms in which subject and predicate are shown to be unified, from which he passes to the syllogism. See W.T. Stace's *The Philosophy of Hegel* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), or Mure (1950) for helpful summaries of Hegel's doctrine.
- 39 This example is taken from Stace (1955), p. 261.
- 40 Steiner puts this in a slightly different though helpful way by stating, using medieval terminology, that when I grasp the I, a unity of an *I ante rem*, an *I in re* and an *I post rem* is achieved. When I truly think I, in other words, the transcendent absolute subject momentarily actualizes itself within me. See his *Philosophie und Anthroposophie*, p. 102.

- 41 The titles of the three main sections of the *Logic of the Concept* are put in brackets to indicate how the form of the subjectivity section is reproduced in its successors. A chart like this one gives an indication of how the threefold logic of Hegel's dialectic is able to unify seemingly disparate parts of a system. It will be shown in the next two chapters how Hegel's conception of the correspondences of this chart is unsatisfactory.
- 42 *Prior Analytics* 24b18–20.
- 43 The being of man, we might say, is a living risk in its contradictory nature, since it has yet to achieve the unity of I and not-I. Only God or the 'I am that I am' is safe.
- 44 Reasons for this will be put forward in chapter 5.
- 45 The spatial correlate of the I is the point, which is absolute (i.e. omnipresent and indivisible) and zero-dimensional. How the extended world is logically and physically related to this point is a question that cannot be considered here.
- 46 This apprehension cannot itself be an act of reason or demonstrated by reasoning, if the latter is understood – as it is by Hegel – syllogistically. What reason can demonstrate is the need, given the self's absoluteness, for a reconciliation of I and what appears as not-I.
- 47 A chain of syllogisms dealing with botanical concepts, for example, would only be complete when the relation of plant life to the absolute subject was understood. It will be shown that Hegel's ontology was too limited for him to have unearthed such a set of mutually mediating concepts grounded in the $I = I$.

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Chapter 4

Logic and Ontology in the *Logic of the Concept*

From the discussion of the syllogism, Hegel moves to the consideration of the object. The disjunctive syllogism gave us a form of reasoning in which the immediacy of the universal (and so the unity of the universal and the particular) was re-established in the individual. Such an individual that unites the universal and the particular Hegel calls an object. Here Hegel is of course concerned with the concept, or we might say the logic, of the object as something independent and self-determining. The category of the object is a much more advanced one than that of the thing, which Hegel considers in the *Logic of Essence*. The thing stands in opposition to its properties (i.e. thing and property mediated one another reflectively), whereas the concept of the object has the self-mediating logic of the syllogism – specifically the disjunctive syllogism in which subject and predicate or universal and particular are unified in the individual – implicit in it. This means that the concept of the object is already implicitly a unity of subject and object, though it is initially a unity *in itself*, and not yet *in and for itself*.

The development of the categories of objectivity sees the unity of subject and object implicit in the concept of the object become explicit as we pass from the object conceived initially as a simple mechanical atom (this recapitulates *Being* and so represents the concept of the object in its immediacy) to first a chemical (*Essence*, or the reflected concept of the object) and then a teleological conception of the object (which anticipates the *Idea*). From here Hegel passes to the concept of the living organism, the first category of the *Idea*, in which the unity of subject and object has become explicit. The living organism is for Hegel a unity of subject and object both *in* and, though in a limited sense, *for itself*, since it determines its own development.

This chapter defends two main critical theses:

- 1 There is a fundamental unresolved tension in Hegel's conception of the logic-ontology relation. This manifests as his inability to answer the question: Are mechanical and chemical objects contradictory in their logic only, or also in their very being? The latter would entail that mechanical and chemical objects do not exist in the full sense. Hegel's failure to reconcile logic and being will be shown to consist in the failure to unify his dialectic with transcendentalism satisfactorily. A proper dialectically-motivated transcendental ontology would demonstrate that material objects are not just categorially derivative of more complete categories, but also ontologically derivative of more fundamental levels of being.
- 2 The transition from the category of chemism to that of teleology is insufficiently motivated. It will be argued that the category of life should precede that of teleology

– at least as considered by Hegel. Teleology sees the introduction of self-consciousness and so thought into Hegel's argument at a point where the living – which for itself is not self-conscious – has not yet even been considered. Hegel thus only achieves the synthesis of mechanism and chemism in the category of teleology by making a massive and unjustified ontological leap from chemical substances to human thought, a leap which, I will argue, presupposes both life and sentence. It will be argued that the underlying ground of this unjustified transition can be traced to the ambiguity in the logic-ontology relation stated in 1.

I begin by sketching Hegel's accounts of mechanism and chemism before entering into a more detailed discussion of teleology.

4.1 Mechanism

Hegel considers three forms of mechanism: formal mechanism, mechanism with affinity¹ and absolute mechanism:

- (i) The category of formal mechanism applies to the basic thesis of the mechanical conception of the object: that objects are a) self-contained and independent units of matter that b) act upon one another in a purely external fashion. Hegel cites pressure and impact as examples of mechanical relations.² He also argues that when soul and body are conceived as entirely distinct entities, they are considered mechanically.
- (ii) Formal mechanism collapses as a category because the very fact that mechanical objects do interact and have an external impact on one another (i.e. are passive in relation to one another) shows that they actually also have an internal nature. It is the internal nature of the mechanical object to be acted upon passively and so to be determined in its behaviour by its other. In so far as mechanical objects are defined in terms of properties determined by their mutual interaction, they have affinity with one another. A formalized example of such mechanical affinity is the so-called law of gravity. Objects under the influence of gravity have their centres of gravity both in themselves and in another. Thus the earth to the extent that it exerts a gravitational force has its centre in itself; to the extent that it is part of a larger system it has a gravitational centre in the sun.³
- (iii) Every mechanical object can be conceived as a point centre that is acted upon by all other such mechanical objects (i.e. point centres). Thus each is a centre (i.e. in itself conceived as independent) of a single network of interacting objects which have their centres in themselves, but also in one another. This network is an absolute mechanism, absolute because it has to be conceived as a mediated unity of parts, although these parts are still themselves conceived mechanically. (The logic of this network is given expression in the form of universal principles or laws such as Newton's laws of motion. The notion of a law goes considerably beyond the logic of the mechanical object considered on its own, however.)

In the concept of the mechanical object in general, we encounter the subject (given that the category of the object is a category of the subjective logic) at its greatest level

of self-alienation.⁴ Within the sphere of objectivity, the mechanical object reflects the immediacy of the categories of being and of identity.

4.2 Chemism⁵

The chemical object reflects the logic of the judgement or of difference: whereas mechanical objects are conceived as simple and independent, interacting with one another in an ostensibly external fashion, chemical objects are explicitly interdependent, or as Hegel puts it, they exist ‘completely in relation to something else’.⁶ An example of a chemical object is an acid which when combined with a base has its active properties neutralized or balanced by the latter in the production of a salt and water. Hegel describes this relation as a striving, i.e. a movement towards some, in this case blind, end – the end realized through the chemical process.⁷

The following summarizes the main points of Hegel’s analysis of the chemical object:

- (i) It is a necessary property of objects conceived chemically that they are able to interact with one another and that these interactions can produce new substances.
- (ii) When two chemical substances interact to produce a third, a unity implicit in the initial substances is realized. Thus when an acid and a base such as chlorine and sodium (the most common alkali metal) are combined, they produce a salt + water, in this case sodium chloride or ordinary table salt. This unity partially cancels or neutralizes their differences.⁸
- (iii) However, this unity does not achieve proper subjectivity (i.e. a proper unity of subject and object),⁹ since the combined elements (e.g. Na – sodium – and Cl – chlorine) cannot be conceived as themselves determined by the compound formed by them (NaCl). Na and Cl have to be presupposed as distinct elements with specific qualities before we can give an account of their unity. (In other words: their qualities cannot be found in the compound produced by their interaction.¹⁰)
- (iv) The chemical object hence only partially overcomes the externality of the mechanical object. When an acid bonds with a base to produce a salt, an identity underlying the originally perceived chemical differences is demonstrated.¹¹ In addition to its inability to account for the qualitative properties of chemicals, this identity is logically incomplete for the following reason: The chemical process that realizes the unity of elements is reversible, but the separation of e.g. sodium chloride into sodium and chlorine is not achieved by sodium chloride itself. Far from being a self-differentiating unity that confers order onto its elements, (like the living organism, or the idea that motivates e.g. a practical project) sodium chloride is a relatively inert mass constituted by a) the inner affinity for one another of acid and base, and b) the external event of their actual combination. It has already been shown that the concept of self gives us the unity of subject and object necessary for any conception of the concept – indeed that the self *is* the concept of the concept or that which is necessarily self-identical. The concept of the chemical object, by contrast, has an identity qualified by differences which cannot be shown to be *its* differences. In other words, though its relation to an

other is intrinsic to it (an acid *is* not a base), the other of the chemical object as a subject (i.e. as an X of which properties are predicated) is not yet *its* other.¹² It is thus logically incomplete because subject and object are not properly united in the chemical object.

Hegel's actual treatment of the logic of the chemical object in the *Logic* harnesses the results of the previous stages of his argument – particularly his dialectical consideration of the syllogism. He argues that it is impossible to complete a satisfactory disjunctive syllogism for the chemical object because the middle term (i.e. the unity of two terms or the neutral product) fails to relate its relata from within itself. (Whereas rationality reappeared as a necessary property of both Socrates and angelicity/humanity in the example given in the previous chapter of a disjunctive syllogism, the neutral product of a chemical reaction does not reappear in both the acid and the base.¹³) What this effectively means is that chemical substances like 'sodium' and 'chlorine' are logically incomplete, and so not properly rational, objects – i.e. it is impossible to conceive them as self-mediating in their relations to one another; as subjects present in their predicates.¹⁴

Considered in relation to the *Logic* as a whole, chemism corresponds within the subjective logic to the *Logic of Essence*, in which Hegel presents reflected or mutually opposed categories such as form and matter which collapse into one another without a higher unity of the opposition between them being realized except through a new category. The acid + base reaction is a good empirical analogue of this, since the salt + water resulting from their interaction is like the new category emerging from an opposition in the face of the impossibility of conceiving the original categories to be fundamental (e.g. form and matter emerging out of the opposition of thing and property).¹⁵

As in his discussion of mechanism, Hegel emphasizes that the logic of the chemical object is not restricted to that sphere of natural science ordinarily called chemistry, but applies to all relations of a chemical nature. Thus the natural relationship between the sexes (i.e. sexual attraction) as well as higher qualities such as love and friendship can also be understood chemically.¹⁶ Indeed every relationship we have to another person can be understood in the language of the logic of chemism. It has often been observed (not least by Hegel) that human beings exist as individuals in their relations to other human beings.¹⁷ Each person offers me a unique way of being myself, since how I present myself is determined in every case by who I am presenting myself to.¹⁸ If humans are conceived as chemical elements, then relationships are like chemical interactions between them: some elements attract, others repel and a third set are indifferent to one another. (It of course goes without saying that human subjectivity has many logical features to it missing in the chemical context.) We even say that 'opposites attract', which might be seen as a crude psychological analogue of the acid-base relation. (As in the chemical case, the mutual attraction of opposites has to be understood in the form of an identity underlying differences – for Hegel this identity is ultimately our common nature as seekers of self-knowledge or of a unification of I and not-I.¹⁹)

Turning, then, to the ambiguity in the logic-ontology relation mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. It can be put in the form of a question: when Hegel says that the mechanical and chemical conceptions of the object are contradictory, is he also

implying that their corresponding objects are contradictory? If so, this would suggest that the entities described by the natural sciences are *in their very being* contradictory – i.e. not real in the full sense. The obvious first question to ask here is thus: What is the relation between the model (or logic) and the object itself? For Kant the matter was a simple one: the object has an independence from our thinking which is given through its passively received sensory component, whereas the model is the outcome of our attempt to discover the rational structure of the perceived world. It was shown in chapters 1 and 2, however, that the heavy cost of this position is ontological scepticism. Neither mechanical nor chemical objects can be said, for Kant, to exist as represented independently of our minds.

It is clear that Hegel seeks to distance himself from this sceptical position, which would seem to leave him with the following options:

- 1 He can uphold the distinction between the logic of an object and the object itself, and say that although e.g. the chemical object exists (mind-independently and in an epistemologically unproblematic sense) its logic is contradictory. (This position can only be upheld by ignoring Kant's scepticism concerning the unknowability of the transcendental ground of sensations, and it results in a split between thinking and being.²⁰)
- 2 He can argue that the contradictory nature of an object's logic – i.e. its failure to manifest a fully-mediated synthesis of subject and object – entails that it does not have being in the full sense; that it must be ontologically derivative of a more fundamental reality. If this were Hegel's position, it would leave him with two further options: He could argue a) that the ontological ground of e.g. perceived chemical reality is the concept of the chemical object,²¹ or b) that its contradictory logic shows that the chemical object cannot exist in the full sense, but that – owing to a persisting dualism between the knower and the known – its ontological ground remains hidden, though possibly related to its logic.

In the following two chapters in particular it will be argued that Hegel in different contexts wanted to defend both 1 and 2a and that as a result he failed to appreciate the contradiction involved in doing so.²² (2b would, it will be argued, have been Hegel's best option, though it would have compromised the completeness of his system.) The central shortcoming of his position is, once again, most easily traced to the failure to deal with the question of sensibility. In chapter 2 it was shown that Hegel's notion of a form of consciousness fails to account for the transcendental ground of sensations. The *Logic of the Concept*, with its notion of the logic or concept of an object, will be shown to suffer the same shortcoming. This thesis will not be defended any further here, since further elements will be added to it in the context of the discussions of teleology, life (where Hegel attempts unsatisfactorily to conceive a logic of sensibility) and, in chapter 6, Hegel's conception of the soul.

4.3 Teleology

The mechanical object realizes ends that are entirely external to it considered as an individual object (i.e. a specific objective subject-object unity) in its relation to its

other. The chemical object, on the other hand, realizes ends – through the chemical reaction and its resulting product – that are at least in part internal to it as object. The end of the reaction between an acid and a base is determined by what it is to be an acid, i.e. to be the opposite of a base, and if we take the acid and base as our starting point, then the chemical process itself can be seen as the means to the realization of the achieved end, the salt. However, the difficulty in ascribing teleology to chemical processes is that their ends cannot actually be discovered in the initial conditions, since these conditions can only be determined as such once the end has been realized. The teleology of mechanical and chemical processes is therefore at best implicit. Hegel tries in the teleology section – which is supposed to synthesize mechanism and chemism – to show how teleology becomes explicit.

One might have expected the synthesis of mechanism and chemism to yield the category of life, biology being the discipline which succeeds physics and chemistry as matter increases in complexity. Living organisms such as plants also manifest obvious, though non-conscious, teleological behaviour in their life-cycles. Hegel, however, needs to save the category of life for the final part of the *Logic*, the *Idea*, since for him living organisms manifest a mediated unity of subjectivity and objectivity which is absent in the initial form taken by the category of teleology. Living organisms have what Hegel calls inner teleology or design, since they assimilate the outer material world to themselves from within. (That Hegel cannot give satisfactory explanatory content to this idea will be argued below.) This he distinguishes from outer teleology, which is imposed on material objects in the realization of practical ends. Although outer teleology is the focus of Hegel's argument in this section, I will discuss both forms, since this will make it easier to see how ontological ambiguities undermine his position.

Three main concepts form the nucleus of Hegel's dialectic of teleology: the subjective end, the means and the realized end. As a unity these are supposed to provide a conception of the object which overcomes the shortcomings of mechanism and chemism, so bringing us closer to understanding how subject and object can be conceived as a unity. Whereas in chemism the three terms of the argument – e.g. acid, base and the salt – could not be internally related to one another, in the case of outer teleology they can be. A subjective end, such as the desire to build a house, is explicitly related to the means through which it is realized, actually building the house etc., as well as to the realized end itself.

I will argue that the logic of the object provided by Hegel's discussion of teleology fails to be a satisfactory sublation of the categories of mechanism and chemism, mainly because it remains ontologically underdetermined. This will involve defending two main theses:

- (i) In so far as Hegel presents a coherent conception of teleology, it is only in relation to human projects and ends (i.e. outer teleology). The transition from the chemical object to the human being, however, misses out the categories of life and sensibility. (This is a jump from the mineral kingdom to the human world which omits what is intrinsic to plant and animal life.)
- (ii) That Hegel's conception of inner design is incomplete because his conception of life is ontologically underdetermined.

It will be argued that a satisfactory conception of teleology would be one that is able to show how teleologically conceived causes constitute the material world right down to the most basic, material level. Such an account would show that objects conceived mechanically and chemically are not just logically but also ontologically derivative of a more fundamental reality. It would also help to show how ends-directed – i.e. intelligent – causes can be active right down to the material level. (That they must be is a condition of a proper spirit-matter or I – not-I reconciliation, itself a necessary constitutive possibility for man. See chapter 3.)

How, then, can Hegel's teleological triplicity of the subjective end, the means and the realized end be applied? It has already been shown that they cannot be applied to mechanical and chemical objects, since although these realize ends in a limited sense, these ends are in no way explicit or for them; they are purely external. I hence now turn to living organisms, after which teleology in the animal kingdom and in human thought are briefly considered.

Teleology in Living Organisms

A living organism such as a plant manifests teleology in that it maintains an ends-directed unity of its parts throughout its development, a development culminating in reproduction. Here we might say that the subjective end is the end of reproduction which is already latent in the plant at the seed stage. The means is the matter – minerals, water, sunlight, air...etc. – assimilated and formed by the plant in the realization of its organic structure (through the leaves, calyx, petals, reproductive organs...) and the realized end is the reproductive process in which a new member of the species – or indeed a slight modification of the species itself – is constituted. The subjective end is hence whatever it is that makes a plant into that unity which determines the structural order of its parts in the realization of functional ends. (What makes a basic living organism like a plant such an interesting case, is that it represents the interface between outer and inner design. In so far as a plant draws minerals and other substances into itself, it imposes order on these substances from without. However, in so far as the resulting order is not external to it – as is e.g. the order of a human artefact – but immediately part of its own nature, this outer design is assimilated to an inner one – i.e. it is subservient to the plant's overall form. This will be discussed further below.)

Here, however, a difficulty arises. What exactly is it in the plant that makes it into a subject which determines its own objectivity (i.e. the form of its parts...) in accordance with an inner design, or specific ends, and how are we to think of these ends themselves? We say that the purpose of a leaf is to absorb sunlight and carbon dioxide, to feed the rest of the plant etc..., but in virtue of what are these functions imbued with *purpose*? When the discussion of life is reached, it will be shown that although Hegel requires a good answer to this question, none is forthcoming: despite on occasion invoking such concepts as 'vital agent' to distinguish the living from the non-living,²³ Hegel had no way of conceiving how the threefold logic of teleology could be realized in a living organism, and so of how chemical matter with its contradictory logic is ontologically derivative of a matter capable of being the vehicle of proper formative ends in nature. The result of this is that the category of teleology is not properly sublated by that of life.

The tendency in modern botany, indeed in modern biology as a whole, is to deny the concept of purpose or teleology – i.e. inner design – any genuine explanatory role in accounting for the nature of living organisms.²⁴ To say that plants produce flowers for specific reasons is then seen as a shorthand way of saying that certain biochemical events happen under certain conditions. Why they happen is answered historically (i.e. by appeal to the principle of natural selection), though by reference to intrinsically ahistorical laws of chemistry or physics: once upon a time, matter combined in such-and-such a way. Then this happened, and this, and this...etc. and we ended up with a plant. Needless to say, such a conception of life is confined to the mechanical, or at best the chemical, logic of the object, and so does not bring us any closer to understanding how an object can have unity or identity – i.e. how its parts can be the parts of a whole, or in the more advanced language of the *Logic of the Concept*, how an object such as a plant can be a subject. (An object's being a subject is a basic feature of the logic of ordinary language and so is present whether we are considering living organisms or atomic theory...²⁵)

It is probably as a result of Hegel's inability to consider the transition from chemism to teleology and life in ontological terms that his discussion of teleology focuses on outer design. Outer design is most obviously present in the human world, though it is also present in an animal's transformation of its environment. (Many animals build dwellings. Some even use simple tools.) Before outer design is considered, however, let us turn briefly to the teleology most obviously intrinsic to animal life: that of appetites.

Teleology in the Animal Kingdom

An appetite is obviously a subjective end in that it necessarily has an intentional component. Appetites exist in subjects as ends-directed relations to specific kinds of object. The sensation of hunger, for example, is a regular reminder that I, as a unity of subject and object (i.e. as a self-regulating organism...), can only exist as such by consuming and so subduing through my subjectivity the food which I require to survive. (Hegel puts this by saying that 'appetite is, so to speak, the conviction that the subjective is only a half-truth, no more adequate than the objective'.²⁶) Food is hence the means to the realization of my subjective end – i.e. the satisfaction of an appetite.²⁷

What limits the application of Hegel's three categories of teleology to the case of appetite, is that in the satisfaction of an appetite, the means (e.g. the food) is entirely consumed in the realization of the end. The realized end is the removal of the appetite, and thus a return to the state in which the subject existed prior to the appearance of the subjective end. The satisfaction of appetite thus has a circular, not a linear logic. In so far as the means is preserved in the realization of the end, this is in relation to an end – e.g. the maintenance of the body, or reproduction... – that is merely implicit in the original subjective end (i.e. the sensation of hunger is, as a sensation, extrinsic to the end that is realized by its satisfaction). In the realized end of an appetite, in short, the means is only preserved in a unification of subject and object that collapses but does not – as does e.g. the end of a human project – preserve the distinction between them.

Teleology in Human Activity

This is in many ways the easiest to understand, since thought presupposes the self-conscious subject or I which alone is able, ultimately, to identify differences or remain itself in the objective realization of an end.²⁸ At the beginning of his discussion of the subjective end, Hegel emphasizes how the category of end or purpose (*Zweck*) succeeds in providing, where categories such as substance and force fail to provide, a logic adequate to the demands of the concept – that, namely, a fully-mediated unity of concept and object should be conceived. It achieves this because an end has its relation to the objective world – a relation in which the means plays the mediating role – contained within it (as a blind cause, for example, does not) at the same time as being a subject able to initiate action.²⁹ Examples from ordinary life illustrate this very well. My desire to sail the seas in a ship is a subjective end related to the objective world through the potential it carries for me to harness all of the necessary means (the building materials, the finances...etc.) in realizing it. The realized end of sailing the seas hence achieves a unity of subjective end and means, or of subject (e.g. a specific end) and object.

The category of outer design, however, has its shortcomings:

- (i) The unities it realizes, e.g. through practical projects, presuppose a matter as given – e.g. the wood of the ship. They are hence not actively brought forth by the subject.
- (ii) The ends realized can themselves be conceived as the means to further ends. The ship as object serves the purpose of sailing the seas to transport goods from one place to another. These goods themselves serve several ends: they provide a means of livelihood for the ship-owner as well as meeting the needs of the recipients of the goods transported...etc. This regress of means-ends relations results from their mutual externality. X is done not for its own sake but for the sake of Y. (Only a convergence of means and ends – i.e. a goal whose end [e.g. freedom] is simultaneously the means [e.g. the path to freedom's realization] – could overcome this regress.)³⁰

Now as the synthesizing category of the objectivity section, the category of teleology is supposed to unify mechanism and chemism. It was shown that the highest category of mechanism was that of absolute mechanism: the lawfulness that unifies a system of mechanically interacting elements. The defining characteristic of the chemical object, on the other hand, was that it existed only in relation to another. These two aspects of mechanism and chemism are supposedly united in teleology as follows: the unity of mechanical objects that determines them as parts of a system reappears as the unifying element in a teleological process, i.e. the concept, which remains itself through constant modification as the end is realized via the means.³¹ The logic of the chemical object – e.g. an acid's being an acid only in relation to a base – resurfaces as the obvious interdependence of end and means – e.g. of the ship and the building materials of which it is made. Though this argument has a certain intuitive appeal, it clearly works only by avoiding questions of ontology.

This initial characterization of teleology leaves us with the following questions:

- (i) What justifies teleology's being a category of the objectivity section, given that its logic explicitly depends upon human thought and so the thinking subject? (This dependence is only implicit in the case of mechanical and chemical objects.)
- (ii) As has been demonstrated, there are two main ways of conceiving the object under the category of teleology: a) in the living organism as a unity of subject and object in so far as living organisms only exist as subjects by assimilating and ordering matter in the realization of structural and functional ends (e.g. the form of the leaf and its purpose for the plant); b) in human thought as a unity of subject and object realized in the attained ends of human action. Now both (a) and (b) can be seen as manifesting forms of inner design: the first in so far as it assimilates matter to itself, the second in that it realizes the ends of thought in the world of the senses – i.e. through the imagination. (It is only the object of (b) that has design from without.) This raises the question: What is the relation between them?³²
- (iii) Hegel considers his philosophical system as a teleologically unfolding whole. Given the ontological shortcomings of Hegel's thought, to be discussed in more detail shortly, is there a way of conceiving such a whole through the category of teleology which successfully unifies subject and object?

It has been implicit in the above discussion that Hegel could not give a satisfactory response to question (i). In the light of the discussion of the different spheres of application of the category of teleology, the reasons for this are now clear. The objectivity section of the *Logic* is supposed to consider the logic of the object – i.e. of that which determines its nature from within itself, of self-subsistent being. The first two examples considered – mechanism and chemism – are straightforward and unproblematic, since they refer us to objects of ordinary experience. The transition to teleology, however, brings the difficulty that its logic is seemingly capable of being realized satisfactorily only by appeal to examples that draw explicitly on human projects and their objects. However, the objects of human ends (e.g. a ship for sailing) have teleology *for us* but in no sense *in themselves* (e.g. the wood of the ship does not determine its form from within itself).³³ Chemical objects, on the other hand, are at the very least represented as embodying the logic of chemism not only for us, but also in themselves. In so far as Hegel's concept of teleology is only satisfactorily realized by human ends, in other words, it ceases to be a proper category of the objectivity section of the *Logic*. This is up to a point conceded by Hegel, who says that the concept of the end gives us the logic of the concept itself – i.e. of a subject that unifies itself with objectivity.

If we turn now to a consideration of the difference between the two senses of inner design mentioned in question (ii), the transition that Hegel makes in the objectivity section from the chemical object to objects explicitly constituted by human thought becomes easier to diagnose.

To begin with, several points can be stated:

- 1 The existence of objects of human design presupposes man's inhabiting a living body. The teleology manifested in the living organism is hence a presupposition of that realized by thought. (Whether a living body is in general a presupposition

of thought and perception is another question. The argument of this book is that it is not.)

- 2 The living organism can only have real inner design if there is a level of being in nature intrinsic to life which is able to assimilate and order the matter of living beings. If such a level of being does not exist, then the inner design of a living organism is merely apparent – i.e. an illusion fostered by highly sophisticated chemical processes. If this were the case, then a metaphysical logic in the Hegelian sense could never be completed, because the gap between physics/chemistry and the world of thought and sensations (including of the objects of outer design) could never be bridged. This is at least tacitly recognized by Hegel who speaks not only, as mentioned above, of the ‘vital agent’ of a living body, but also on many occasions about a soul as that which orders the body.³⁴ (For the purposes of argument I will simply adopt the concept of a ‘vital agent’ as the active aspect of the living organism. Hegel’s use of it and similar concepts in his thought will be criticized below.)
- 3 Just as the vital agent of the living organism forms and orders chemical substances in making them into e.g. a plant, so the concepts that realize human ends form and order the world of percepts. The vital agent thus stands to ordinary matter as concepts stand to percepts.

In this last point, both the agent of life and the concept are conceived as the subject which assimilates matter to itself in an ends-directed realization of a unity of subject and object. There is, however, a big difference between them as subjects (in addition to the fact that one presupposes the other but not vice-versa):³⁵ one of them is immediately and necessarily an instrument of self-consciousness, whereas the other is not. Given that there can only be one absolute subject underlying all derivative subjects (i.e. the particular objects or individuals of the empirical world),³⁶ and given that its logical form is that of the self of thought, $I = I$, the vital agent as the subject which orders living matter must be logically (and so, implicitly, ontologically) dependent on this absolute subject.³⁷ Another way of putting this is to say that the living organism as an agent of the realization of teleological ends in nature is a subject-object unity in itself *for us*, but not yet – given that it is not self-conscious and that the vital agent belongs to the sphere of the not-I – properly *for it*.³⁸ The objects of human ends, on the other hand, in that they are not immediately assimilated to our organization but maintain a material objectivity, manifest a teleological unity of subject and object *for us*, but not *in themselves*. (The ship is not in any way self-regulating.)³⁹

Both living organisms and thinking beings hence presuppose an external matter in order to realize their ends. As such, they presuppose an objective realm lying beyond the creative sphere of the subject. For humans this externality is not only that of the material world beyond their bodies (given through perception and so resting on sensibility), but also that of the life processes of these bodies themselves, since these realize teleological ends which lie beyond human consciousness.⁴⁰ It will be argued below that if a proper unity of subject and object is to be realized, then the externality for the self of the spheres of sentence, life (i.e. the vital agent...) and the matter harnessed to the ends of life (i.e. chemical substances...) would have to be overcome.⁴¹ Only this would represent a freely attained reconciliation of both self and world and end and means.⁴² The full account of such a possible reconciliation would

also show that it could only be realized via an ontology which is constituted transcendently with this end as its logical ground.

These, then, have been the main conclusions of this chapter:

- 1 There is an ambiguity in Hegel's *Logic* surrounding its relation to ontology. This is because Hegel is unable to provide a decisive answer to the question: are the objects of the material world (e.g. chemical substances) contradictory in their very being, or merely in their logical form? It is implicit throughout Hegel's system that 'both' is intended. The inadequate transition from chemism to teleology, as well as the ontological under-determination of the logic of chemism itself (i.e. the failure to emphasize questions related to an ontology of the qualities of chemical substances), however, are clear symptoms of Hegel's failure to demonstrate this.
- 2 The transition from chemism to teleology in Hegel's account is achieved at the expense of ontological continuity in the *Logic*. I have hinted that this is due to the absence in Hegel's thought of a systematic place for realms of being corresponding to the worlds of life and sentience. Hegel can only achieve the transition from chemism to teleology by introducing a logical discussion of teleology in human thought, which prematurely brings self-consciousness into his discussion. (Teleology in living organisms alone would have provided an intermediate category due to the absence of absolute subjectivity.)⁴³

Notes

- 1 In the *Science of Logic* proper Hegel's threefold division is into the mechanical object, the mechanical process and the absolute mechanism.
- 2 See *Enc. Logic* §195.
- 3 A good social example of mechanical affinity would be the anthropological principle of segmentary opposition. This is the principle, described by Evans-Pritchard in his book *The Nuer. A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), whereby e.g. two tribal segments, A and B, which might under ordinary conditions be rivals, will join together to form a larger group X, to fight a correspondingly larger rival, Y. X and Y might then, in the face of attack from an even larger group, join together to form P to fight S... Here each mechanical object (e.g. each tribal segment, tribe...) stands in a relation of mechanical affinity to others within a larger system. Evans-Pritchard's principle has been criticized on empirical grounds, but it clearly applies in certain areas of contemporary culture – e.g. in the shifting allegiances of football supporters when the context of competition between teams changes from e.g. a regional to a national or a national to an international setting.
- 4 The materialism widespread in modern science and analytical philosophy in particular reflects above all the identification of reality with the logic of the mechanical object.
- 5 Hegel's discussion of chemism in the *Science of Logic* is at times very difficult to follow. I cannot consequently claim to have understood all of it. The main points, however, are clear.
- 6 *Enc. Logic* §200, Zusatz.
- 7 In his *Philosophy of Nature*, part II of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel considers the chemical process and object as the unity of magnetism and electricity, which are not mentioned in the *Logic*. (See e.g. *Enc. Nature*, from §324 to §326, including the *Zusätze*.) Whereas

mechanical objects interact with one another externally, the magnetic object – in having a north and south pole united within it – is immediately a unity of itself and its other, albeit one that exists in a state of unresolvable tension. Electricity demonstrates a form of polar relations between objects that are otherwise conceived as external to one another (e.g. a Perspex rod and the little pieces of paper that stick to it when it has been rubbed). The chemical process and its object represent a unity of magnetism and electricity to the extent that they demonstrate both the interiority of the magnetic polar relation (in the neutral product in which the opposed elements are implicit) and the exteriority of the relation between electrically charged entities (the opposed elements that are nonetheless related to each other).

- 8 The explanation given within modern chemistry for acid-base reactions is reductionist – i.e. such reactions are understood as exchanges of hydrogen ions (i.e. protons or positive charges). An acid has a tendency to lose a proton, a base a tendency to gain one. (This is the outline of the Bronsted-Lewry definition of the acid-base reaction. Its main competitor is the Lewis definition, which makes electron-exchange the defining characteristic. It states that an acid is an ionic species that can accept an electron *pair* from a base with the resulting formation of a chemical bond composed of a shared electron pair.) Such explanations and definitions clearly do not account for the qualitative or phenomenological properties of acids and bases, but establish correlations between the events (i.e. chemical changes) in which these properties manifest and ostensibly underlying atomic processes which occur simultaneously with them. From Hegel's perspective, the chemistry that rests on modern atomic theory represents its object according to the logic of the mechanical object, not the logic which is proper to chemistry itself. (I leave aside, at this point, the philosophical implications of the subtleties of quantum mechanics, though they would lead us closer to a logic of the chemical object as understood by Hegel.)
- 9 As already demonstrated and as Kant argues, subjectivity is always implicit where there is unity.
- 10 The Encyclopaedia Britannica summarizes some of the distinctive qualities of acids and bases as follows: 'Acids are chemical compounds that show, in water solution, a sharp taste, a corrosive action on metals, and the ability to turn certain blue vegetable dyes red. Bases are chemical compounds that, in solution, are soapy to the touch and turn red vegetable dyes blue. When mixed, acids and bases neutralize one another and produce salts, substances with a salty taste and none of the characteristic properties of either acids or bases.' *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2001 Deluxe Edition, CD ROM*.
- 11 In modern chemistry, this underlying identity of sodium and chlorine is understood in the language of atomic theory. How and which elements are able to combine with one another (i.e. their valency) is explained in terms of the physics of chemical bonding. Thus the individual identities of sodium and chlorine are determined by their specific atomic structures and the forms of behaviour that these make possible: sodium is a group 1 metal with an atomic number of 11, i.e. it has 11 protons in its nucleus, chlorine is a group 17 gas with an atomic number of 17. Needless to say the atomic structure of a chemical substance would not, from the Hegelian perspective, be enough to establish its identity or nature as a chemical substance, though it does provide a mechanical model (currently incomplete) for understanding how causal interactions between the constituents of atoms can be correlated with the observed properties of chemical reactions. What identifies differences in this model are the unchanged constituents of an atom – i.e. protons and electrons – that are transferred from one atom to another when new or original chemical substances are formed. Of course the specific nature of these elements themselves depends on their place in atomic theory as a whole, and given that the latter requires a thinking self – the absolute ground of all identity – to be conceived at all, atomic theory could not be complete, from a consistent Hegelian perspective, until the relation between e.g. electrons and the self

which conceives them is understood. (For a Steinerian conception of how one might conceive a chemistry which does equal justice to both atomic and qualitative properties of chemical substances, see E. Lehrs' *Man or Matter* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1985), in particular part 3, 'Towards a New Cosmosophy'.)

- 12 The self or I, by contrast, has to have its other as itself. Thus whereas its identity is absolute, the identity of a substance like water can be destroyed by an activity as simple as boiling it, with the result that the elements of which it is composed reassert themselves as different from one another.
- 13 To consider the relevant basic structural features of the atom as the mediating term, as does the modern chemist, would be to miss the point of Hegel's argument. Firstly, a mediating term between e.g. electrons and protons would itself have to be discovered for a genuine mediation to be possible, and secondly, the qualitative properties of the different terms would be unaccounted for by such an argument.
- 14 This implies a corresponding ontological inadequacy – i.e. that chemical substances cannot be ontologically (as they cannot be logically) basic. This is of course argued for other reasons by the modern chemist, but with the loss of irreducible chemical qualities. It will shortly be argued that Hegel fails to realize the ontological implications of his conception of the logic of the chemical object – i.e. the need for an ontology that accounts for the qualitative properties of chemical substances.
- 15 Of course the logic of a self-mediating and self-differentiating whole is already implicit in the way the categories are treated throughout the *Logic*, since we are dealing with the logical development of the *Idea*. This means that unlike in the case of the chemical object itself (in contrast to the concept of the chemical object which passes into teleology), the categories of the *Logic of Essence* do not fall back into their predecessors in order to be recombined, but develop into further categories until the *Logic of the Concept* and genuinely mediated categories are reached.
- 16 See *WdL II* (*Werke* 6 p. 429; Miller L, p. 727; Glock, 5: 201) Hegel here, probably unwittingly, reflects at the logical level a basic principle of the alchemical tradition, namely that the qualitative relations between chemical elements – in alchemy e.g. between sulphur and mercury – parallel corresponding relations at both a) the soul and b) the spiritual levels.
- 17 In the *Phenomenology* Hegel considers this principle from two main perspectives: a) that of consciousness itself – from which perspective every relation to an other (e.g. to an official) is a relation to myself (e.g. the ordinary citizen...), and b) that of the phenomenologist observing the relations between different forms of self-relation – e.g. that of the master and of the slave.
- 18 Of course a new self-conception can only arise if I enter into a proper relationship with someone. If I encounter someone as a mere abstract instance of e.g. a specific social category – such as 'labourer' – I shall fail to cultivate a new self-conception. (Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) develops the idea of a chemistry of human relationships.)
- 19 For this analogy to hold, something of the relationship into which chemical elements enter should be retained as a form of memory or imprint in each element, as happens with human beings whose friendships and loves arise and pass away, leaving them with memories and a slightly modified personality. If this were the case, our conception of the logic of the chemical process would have to be altered – i.e. this process would have to have a clear temporal linearity, the past being retained in the present, rather than allowing it to be conceived in a mechanical (i.e. reversible) temporal framework in which time is considered as a mere container of outer events such as the combination and separation of the constituents of atoms. (This would also bring the logic of chemism closer to that of life. See chapter 5.) The idea that chemical elements can have something like a memory

- has been argued by Rupert Sheldrake, who introduces the concept of a morphic field to explain this. See his *The Presence of the Past* (London: Collins, 1988).
- 20 In the secondary literature, the tendency to read Hegel as having upheld this position has led to materialistic interpretations of his thought. Yet if Hegel, of all people, can be read as a materialist, this can surely only be because his dialectic of the spirit or form-matter relation (indeed that between subject and object) is unresolved. In the consideration of Hegel's conception of life, the origins of his residual materialism will become clearer. Amongst the claims that can be used to support this materialism is Hegel's statement that nature is temporally prior, though logically posterior, to spirit. (See e.g. *Enc. Nature* §248, Zusatz.) This claim of Hegel's implies that spirit somehow emerges out of nature, which I will demonstrate below – in the consideration of Hegel's anthropology in particular – is inconsistent with other conclusions he argues for. Textual evidence of Hegel's anti-materialism is widespread – thus e.g. his claim that 'the idea of a composite concept would be even worse than the materialism which takes the substance of the soul to be composite but thinking to be simple' (*WdL* II (*Werke* 6), p. 291; Miller L, p. 615; Glock, 5: 55). (I will argue in the following chapters that materialistic readings of Hegel are possible – as they are not in the case of Kant – only because his thought is insufficiently transcendental.)
 - 21 This interpretation of his thought – which seems to be supported by the conclusion of the *Logic* as I will argue – has led to Hegel's looking like the rather wild and unconvincing idealist many have taken him to be.
 - 22 (1) also gives more support to the thought that the difference between the *Logic* and the philosophy of nature or the *Realphilosophie* as a whole reflects an ontological dualism for Hegel. Whatever Hegel's intentions concerning this question, it is clear that the philosophy of nature, though much more detailed, does not add much of great philosophical import to the basic arguments of the *Logic*.
 - 23 See e.g. *Enc. Logic* §217 and the *Zusätze* to §§ 218 and 219.
 - 24 R. Dawkins is an example of a biological thinker who attempts to explain both evolutionary and developmental biology in purely mechanical terms. See his *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), or, for a more technical discussion, *The Extended Phenotype. The Gene as the Unit of Selection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).
 - 25 A consideration of the philosophical and scientific implications of languages which have a more processual logic and a correspondingly more processual ontology than English and other Indo-European languages would require more space than is here available.
 - 26 *Enc. Logic* §204.
 - 27 Of course when dealing with appetites, we immediately enter into the sphere of sensations, whose logic should be one step more refined than that of life. Whereas the living object – as the mediating term between outer and inner teleology – assimilates matter to itself without any obvious awareness (this requires us to qualify in more detail the way in which it has an existence *for itself* – something I shall attempt to do shortly), appetites very obviously have the inwardness of sensation associated with them. See also chapters 5 and 6.
 - 28 Hegel even says of the end that it is 'the *concept* which has returned to itself through objectivity' (*WdL* II p. 446); my italics.
 - 29 The content of the categories of force, substance and cause, on the other hand, can only be found in their expressions – i.e. the manifestation of force, accidents or properties and the effect. (See the corresponding discussions in Hegel's *Logic of Essence*.) What this in effect means is that e.g. the concept of cause is a more primitive or incomplete expression than that of the end or purpose: only the category of purpose is adequate to the logical demand of unifying subjectivity and objectivity. As a category of *Essence*, the concept of cause lacks the determination of subjectivity and so is conceived externally, as in today's natural science.

- 30 Hegel's statement in the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*Werke* 3: 24; Miller P, p. 11; Glock, 2: 24) that the true is the whole – a statement to which his system, including the *Logic*, gives expression – is the attempted fulfilment of the aim of conceiving a synthesis of the means and end of existence. In his discussion of teleology Hegel links the realization of this end by Spirit with the notion of the cunning of reason. It will be seen below that the way in which Hegel conceives its realization dissociates it from the individual human being and the human self.
- 31 Hegel considers the different way in which the whole is present in each stage (e.g. the means present in the subjective end, the subjective end present in the realized end...) through the syllogism. He considers three syllogisms, in each of which one of the three terms of the dialectic plays the role of middle. Here Hegel thus attempts to show how the logic of the syllogism is sublated in the category of teleology in a higher form than in either mechanism or chemism. See *WdL* II, pp. 445–61; Miller L, pp. 740–754; Glock, 5: 217–235.
- 32 It was shown above that Kant thought the relation between them could not be understood, since he considered the grounds of a living organism's inner design to be unknowable – that teleology could only be a regulative and in no way a constitutive category of our search for knowledge. Aristotle, on the other hand, who is mentioned alongside Kant by Hegel in the discussion of inner design (see *Enc. Logic* §204), accounts for the inner design of living organisms through the concepts of vital heat and *pneuma*.
- 33 Human ends have an existence in, as well as for, us through their objective existence as dispositions etc. ... in our organisation. Being able to say in what these dispositions themselves inhere would require knowledge of the mind-body relation.
- 34 See e.g. *Enc. Logic* §298, Zusatz or the treatment of the soul – to be discussed below – in the greater *Logic*. (See *WdL* II, pp. 494–7; Miller L, pp. 780–783; Glock, 5: 270–273.)
- 35 It has been shown that which presupposes which is ambiguous in Hegel, since his philosophy tries unsuccessfully to unite bottom-up (thought presupposes life) and top-down (life presupposes thought) approaches to the matter-spirit relation. I have argued, and will do so in further detail below, that Hegel should have argued for the need for a fully realistic dialectical unity of spirit and matter which sees matter to be dependent on spirit, although ultimately substantially one with it. (Such a unity would need to demonstrate that even chemical substances are the results of teleological processes.)
- 36 See chapter 3.
- 37 In Hegel's own argument this point is developed – I shall argue: inadequately – as the transition from the category of life to that of cognition.
- 38 In so far as the notion of a vital agent could thus play a significant role in accounting for teleology in living organisms, it could do so only as the efficient instrument of holism in a living organism. It could not account for a possible final cause of living organisms. (The latter would introduce the consideration of teleology between species in nature, or inter-species teleology. Given that man is, for Hegel as for Aristotle, the end of nature, every natural form should have a relation that qualifies this teleology – i.e. that sublunar species exist in *some* form for man – within it. It will be shown below how Steiner's conception of nature allows such a relation – entirely absent in Hegel – to be conceived.)
- 39 Although the objects of human ends are not assimilated to our material organization (unlike the matter of the plant), they do become part of it (and so have teleology *in us*) as either a) the capacity to form such objects (e.g. a ship), or b) the capacity to recognize such objects as occupying a particular place within a social world. Outer design does, in short, have an inner element. (Some might claim that computers are human artefacts able to perform teleological operations. However, since a) self-consciousness is a precondition of thought and so of conscious teleological operations, and b) the self is not a material entity whereas the computer is, computers cannot be self-conscious.)

- 40 The distinction between these is that between (at least central aspects of) what Aristotle called man's first and his second nature. His first nature is as a biological organism or as an animal. His second nature is formed by the realization of the ends of thought. A fully mediated unity of subject and object would see man unify his first and his second natures by transforming the former from the top down using the latter (i.e. the self). Steiner's anthroposophy makes this possibility conceivable through a cosmology (grounded in his expanded anthropological ontology) that ranges over vast cycles of human evolution from the spiritual world into the physical and then back, via a gradual transformation of the latter, to the spiritual. See also chapters 6 and 7.
- 41 In the language of epistemology this would give us a fully mediated unity of the concept and the percept or, in Kantian terms, of spontaneity and receptivity.
- 42 If we think back to the table of section 3.2, it is the concept-percept unity in column B (i.e. the objective subject-object unity) which would have to be unified with the absolute subject of column A in the realization of that end. It has already been mentioned that the fully mediated unity of spirit and matter is best represented historically by the resurrection of Christ. Applied to the category of teleology, this would make the incarnation and passion into the archetypal means, and the resurrection into the realized end (for man in his current state the merely subjective end), of human existence.
- 43 The fact that in his discussion of life Hegel hardly considers the category of teleology, but on several occasions refers to the mechanical and chemical objects as the objective world over against which life maintains itself, can be taken as evidence in defence of the claim that life and not teleology should have been considered after chemism.

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Chapter 5

The Idea and the Loss of the Absolute in Hegel's Logic

At the beginning of his discussion of the Idea Hegel says that it is 'truth in itself and for itself – the absolute unity of the concept and objectivity'. Further: 'In the Idea we have nothing to do with the individual, nor with figurative conceptions, nor with external things. And yet, again, everything actual, in so far as it is true, is the Idea, and has its truth by and in virtue of the Idea alone.'¹ Hegel here states two conclusions that I will argue cannot be harmonized:

- (i) That the Idea is the truth as an absolute unity of concept and object, and
- (ii) That the Idea has nothing to do with individual things and external reality.

I will argue that the separation of the Idea from external reality and individual things reflects an undigested dualism between thinking and being which renders Hegel's notion of an absolute unity of concept and object incoherent, and leaves his dialectic incomplete. In the Idea section of the *Logic*, this dualism manifests most obviously in three areas: 1. Hegel's conception of the logic of life and of the transition from life to cognition; 2. In the discussion of cognition itself this dualism appears in two forms: a) in the ambiguous place occupied by the concept of self in the *Logic*, and b) in Hegel's brief discussion of the soul and of anthropology; and 3. Most glaringly, thought and reality remain unreconciled in Hegel's conception of the Absolute Idea itself.

I begin, however, with a brief discussion of the broader context of this chapter's main arguments: a) of the position of the self in the *Logic of the Concept* and in Hegel's conception of the Idea, and b) of the relation of the *Logic* to the rest of the system. It was pointed out in chapter 3 that Hegel does not consider the self explicitly until his presentation of the categories of the Idea. Given that judging and syllogizing both presuppose self-consciousness, this raises the obvious question why. The obvious answer is that, in uniting the empirical and the non-empirical, the universal and the particular, the subject and the object, self-consciousness presents the absolute nature of the concept. (See chapter 3.) As such it has to be a category of the Idea, since the Idea is that which unifies subjectivity and objectivity. The judgement and the syllogism considered as mere forms of thought alone do not yet achieve such a unity. They can be represented at most as the logical media (the form of the content) in which absolute knowledge unfolds. To this extent self-consciousness is merely implicit in them and not yet explicit.

By placing the self or I after the discussion of objectivity in the *Logic*, Hegel thus reverses the order of categories of the *Differenzschrift*,² in which – since he is

following Fichte – the self was presented as self-positing and so as the beginning of a science of philosophy. This reversal can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

	Subjectivity	Objectivity	
<i>Differenzschrift:</i>	Subjective subject-object unity [the I = I]	Objective [the not-I]	subject-object unity
	Synthesis of these = unity of the subjective and objective subject-object unities.		
<i>Logic of Concept:</i>	Concept-judgement-syllogism	Mechanical-chemical teleological	
	Synthesis of these = Idea: Life, cognition [including the I = I], Absolute Idea.		

Instead of being the absolute ground of all duality and the first principle of a philosophy, as it is in Fichte, the self takes up its place in Hegel's argument only very late on in the *Logic*. The place of the first category is given, as was briefly stated in chapter 3, to being. This, however, raises several questions:

- (i) What is the relation between being and the Absolute Idea, and which of these is to be thought of as the mind of God before the creation? That is which comes at the beginning of the system? If the world as a whole is seen as the self-differentiation of a single unity, under which category is this original unity conceived?
- (ii) What is the relation between being and the self which thinks it at the beginning of the *Logic*?
- (iii) How does the separation of concept and object which is ostensibly overcome in the category of the Idea arise? Hegel argues that this separation is contradictory, that concept and object must be one, but how did it arise in the first place?

If the *Logic* were conceived as a complete philosophical system within itself, the first question would in certain respects be much easier to answer than it is. In this event being would be the pure, undifferentiated potentiality of a world; the absolute unity of thought and being prior to the creation. The Absolute Idea – the mediated unity of all the categories of logic – would then represent the completed actualization of this potentiality and the return to the absolute unity of thought and being. God would then be both the beginning and the end of the system and the path between being and the Absolute Idea would be his self-differentiation and self-reunification. Within the whole system, however, the *Logic* in its entirety is conceived as both its beginning and its end. How, in this context, are we to think of the *Logic* as a beginning (i.e. as God prior to the creation)? As being or as the Absolute Idea?

If it is answered that God is the Absolute Idea, then given that the Absolute Idea is conceived as the absolute unity of concept and object, this must make God the sublation not only of all of the categories of the *Logic*, but also of the rest of the system. Yet this would mean that God is the same prior to the creation as he is once the opposition of creator and created is overcome, which would leave us with a

vicious circle: the end presupposes the beginning which is itself an end. In other words: the beginning of the system can itself only be conceived as a result, with the consequence that we can have no proper beginning.³ (On this view, the meaning of history – defended with such exhilarating force in Hegel's *Phenomenology* – would also be lost, since if end and beginning are the same, then no notion substantially new is added in a new repetition of the cycle.) If, on the other hand, being – as ostensibly purely immediate – is conceived as the beginning, then we should have to say that (unless we identify God with being) God is not there at the beginning, but only at the end of the *Logic*. Yet this would give us not only a very strange notion of God, it would also contradict Hegel's claim that the *Logic* as a whole is the mind of God before the creation. In addition it would force us to say that, given that the end and the beginning of the system have to be the same, being must be its end.

There is, in short, an unresolved tension concerning the beginning of Hegel's system. Unless we take the Absolute Idea and being to be equivalent⁴ – which would contradict Hegel's claim that one is immediate, the other fully-mediated – Hegel cannot avoid a vicious circle.

What about the position of the self in all of this? Although the self does not come into Hegel's argument until very late in the *Logic*, it is implicit throughout, since the *Logic* begins not with being as such, but with the concept of being: i.e. with thought's thinking itself under the determination of being. The licence for this beginning is given by the conclusion of the *Phenomenology*, which Hegel claims is a presupposition of the *Logic*,⁵ since it is here that Hegel defends the thesis that thinking and being are one and criticizes the empiricism (e.g. that of Kant) which insists on their separation. In chapter 2, however, it was argued that Hegel does not satisfactorily overcome empiricism in the *Phenomenology*, and that sensibility remains throughout an unaccounted-for given for him. (In the discussion of the anthropology in chapter 6 it will become clearer how and why it is such a presupposition.) What this means is that the implicit premise which justifies being's being the first category of the *Logic* – i.e. that thinking and being are one – is no longer valid.⁶

Could not then the self – as absolute and so beyond the opposition of beginning and end or immediacy and mediation (see chapter 3) – indeed be the true beginning (in a logical sense) of a system? This thesis could be defended only if it were shown how from this beginning concept and object come to be separated as they seem to be in our experience. Something can only be shown to be a beginning if we can say what immediately follows from it. When the discussion of Steiner is reached, it will be argued that any such demonstration would require conceiving a greatly expanded ontology.

In the current chapter, however, the focus is on Hegel's attempt and failure to conceive the unity of concept and object in the notion of the Idea. This Idea, Hegel says, 'may be called reason (this is the proper philosophical signification of reason); subject-object; the unity of the ideal and the real, of the finite and the infinite, of soul and body; the possibility which has its actuality in its own self; that of which the nature can be thought only as existence, etc. All of these descriptions apply, because the Idea contains all the relations of understanding, but contains them in their infinite self-return and self-identity.'⁷

5.1 Life

The concept of life gives the logic of the Idea in its immediacy, because although it presents a unity of subjectivity and objectivity, this is a unity in itself and not yet for itself. In the following I shall argue that Hegel fails to explain how the living organism instantiates such a unity. Although his argument is supposed to be purely logical or conceptual, it will be shown that Hegel cannot avoid using concepts in its exposition that raise more immediate questions of ontology. I begin with a brief sketch of the main questions to be put to Hegel's account, and pass from here to a critical presentation of this account itself, before concluding with some more general reflections on the shortcomings of Hegel's view of life and how these might be remedied.

Living organisms are active subjects which assimilate the outer, material world to themselves, so unifying subject and object. However, they do not do so as self-conscious subjects, from which follows that what plays the role of the subject in Hegel's account of life must be something other than thought. That this is at least implicit in Hegel's argument can be drawn from the fact that the latter rests upon his use of concepts like vital agent, omnipresent soul (*allgegenwärtige Seele*),⁸ soul, drive (*Trieb*), end or purpose (*Zweck*) and subjective force or power (*Macht*),⁹ which in different ways all play the role of the subjective agent which fulfils life's logic or concept in relation to the outer world. It will be shown, however, that these concepts remain ontologically unrealized. (A symptom of this is Hegel's occasional statement that the subjectivity of a living organism is, in actual fact, the concept.¹⁰) This leaves us asking the question of their precise status: Should they be taken as purely conceptual categories, or perhaps merely as elaborate metaphors? Or should we read ontological implications of their use into Hegel's argument? His inability to answer these questions satisfactorily will be shown to undermine Hegel's account of life. (Here I restrict my discussion to the *Logic*, but the argument actually applies to the whole system.)

A further question to be considered is: If life offers a unity of subject and object, then what implications does this have for the ontological status of mechanical and chemical objects? The basic form of Hegel's procedure in the *Logic* is to say that earlier terms (e.g. being) are implicitly contained in later ones (e.g. essence). What this should mean from an ontological perspective is that the ordinary material world must be implicit in that of the living organism, and not vice-versa.¹¹ The question is initially a logical one: What is implied by the claim that subjectivity must be implicit in objectivity?, but it quickly becomes an ontological one too: How can whatever acts as the subjective agent of life upon the world of dead matter actually be related to the latter as a subject to an object? It must, after all, be remembered that wherever there is a relation, for Hegel, there is an identity underlying differences. Given that the category of life is a more advanced one than that of mechanical and chemical objects there must be an identity (i.e. a higher unity) underlying the difference between the agent of life as subject and the material world as object. (Without such an identity, the one could not act on or be acted on by the other.) This identity, the higher unity of the living subject and the dead object, would, however, as a category of the idea, have to transcend the life-death opposition, which would amount to a demonstration that this opposition is ultimately illusory.¹²

Hegel does at points in his argument at least partially recognize this need to consider the agent of life to be more fundamental ontologically than the mechanical and chemical objects, as when he says that in relation to the living being, the 'presupposed outer world only has the value of something negative and dependent'.¹³ However, the fact that in this example he still calls the outer world 'presupposed' shows that he does not consider it to be dependent in any strong sense.¹⁴ (This example, in short, demonstrates the tension in Hegel's position between a) considering the mechanical or chemical object to be dependent on the agent of life – as objectivity on subjectivity, and b) considering the outer world to be, nonetheless, a presupposition of life.¹⁵) The result of all of this is that life as subjectivity does not actually achieve a proper victory over objectivity. This is of course consistent with the evidence of our everyday senses: the individual living organism – for example an individual self-conscious being – cannot resist the progressive encroachment of objectivity against the subject represented by the ageing process and death. However, this impotence of life against death goes against the requirements of a true unification of subjectivity and objectivity.¹⁶

Further evidence of Hegel's failure to unify subjectivity and objectivity satisfactorily under the category of life is given through his claims that 'when the living being is dead, then the two sides of the idea are different ingredients',¹⁷ and 'when the soul has fled from the body, the elementary powers of objectivity begin their play. These powers are, as it were, continually on the spring, ready to begin their process in the organic body; and life is the constant battle against them.'¹⁸ Needless to say, the soul that has fled the body in this quotation also very quickly flees Hegel's discussion, leaving behind it the impression that his conception of the soul in this case is little more than a shadowy metaphor. Hegel is unable, in other words, to say anything more specific about the nature of the subjective (i.e. essentially living) ingredient when it is separated from the objective, though the logic of his argument clearly requires this. (This failure also applies to his consideration of the higher levels of soul, e.g. the feeling soul, in the anthropology. See chapter 6.) It is thus because the subjective element remains a mere conceptual construct but an ontological blank that Hegel's conception of life can be seen as failing to overcome materialism. (To call Hegel a materialist on account of this would be a grave misreading: the failure to realize a desired end should not be taken as the endorsement of an entirely different one.)

These, then, are the main areas where Hegel's standing as a logician of life will be challenged: 1. The nature of the subjective side of the subject-object relation. Here the question of ontology is emphasized; and 2. The implications of a logic of life for the ontological status of the objective worlds of mechanism and chemism. Here I emphasize Hegel's failure to unify subject and object satisfactorily. Turning first, however, to Hegel's logic of life itself.

Like the categories of mechanism, chemism and teleology, the category of life has three moments in Hegel's argument: (i) the living individual, in which Hegel considers the organism as a subjective whole over against the objective world surrounding it, (ii) the life process, which considers subjectivity's mastery over the objective world, and (iii) the concept of species, which is supposed to be the higher unity of the opposition of (i) and (ii).

The Living Individual

Hegel emphasizes that the living organism as individual is not simply a whole made up of parts. It is, rather, a whole each of whose parts has the whole within it. That is to say: it is a subject immediately present in itself considered as objective. A whole made up of parts could not be purposive, could not have an inner element – in short, could not be alive.¹⁹ This relation of the subject to its objectivity in the living organism manifests a teleology in which end and means are no longer external to one another as they are in the case of objects of outer teleology.²⁰ The leaves or petals of a plant, for example, are both a) ends of growth – thus objects saturated with the subjectivity of the organizing, vital agent, and b) means for the realization of further ends within the plant. As an end of growth a leaf or petal as subject orders and manipulates or transforms its parts – e.g. transforms a cell located at the plant meristem into a leaf cell – whilst itself being ordered by the plant as a whole.²¹ (Thus the production of reproductive organs, for example, affects what happens in other parts of the plant.) A plant as subject, in short, remains itself through change and so, according to Hegel, manifests the logic of the concept: the fact that identity is maintained as subjectivity in difference. When the parts of a living organism produce one another, it is really this organism which produces itself.²²

Questions of course still remain to be asked about this characterization – specifically about the ground of subjectivity within living organisms – to which I shall return below. I now turn briefly to three sub-categories of the living individual that Hegel introduces into his argument: sensibility, irritability and reproduction. These are, respectively, supposed to characterize the individual organism in its universality, particularity and individuality.

- a) *Sensibility*. Hegel calls sensibility the ‘pure trembling within itself of the animate’.²³ One imagines something like the immediate (and so universal) self-relation of the sensing animal – for example a frightened rabbit that senses itself without mediation (i.e. without the interference of thought) through its fear; that momentarily *is* its fear. Hegel also characterizes sensibility through the concepts of ‘absolute difference’ and ‘infinitely determinable receptivity’. (It might come as a surprise to find these concepts here, since they imply that sensibility as such does not have absolute identity immanent within it. They will be considered and criticized when Hegel’s account of sensibility is discussed below.²⁴)
- b) *Irritability*. Whereas sensibility gives the moment of a living organism’s self-identity (albeit in a state of absolute difference), irritability is supposed to reflect the negation of this identity. Hegel actually says very little about irritability in the *Logic*, but in the philosophy of nature he recapitulates the category and says that ‘irritability is just as much a capacity for being stimulated by an other and the reaction of self-maintenance against it, as it is also, conversely, an active maintenance of self, in which it is at the mercy of an other’.²⁵
- c) *Reproduction*. The unity of the immediate self-relation of sensation and the encounter with opposition of irritability is overcome, for Hegel, in reproduction. Reproduction is here taken in the broader sense of assimilating the other to oneself – i.e. reproducing oneself in the other, which in the philosophy of nature Hegel considers in relation to digestion above all. (In the more complete sense of

the reproduction of a species member this category is considered by Hegel below under 'species'.) Hegel calls reproduction life in its concrete sense, in relation to which sensibility and irritability are merely abstract moments.²⁶

The Life Process

The emphasis of Hegel's discussion of the life process is the battle against objectivity in which the living organism engages to sustain itself. As already mentioned, the living organism encounters this world as something presupposed in relation to which it objectifies itself. Hegel's discussion does not add much beyond what has already been stated, but the following claims should be considered:

- 1 In that the living organism is a subject which remains itself in its objectivity it is, Hegel says, an absolute contradiction. The contradiction is this: each essential part of the living organism has the totality of its (or the)²⁷ concept within it – i.e. each is both subject and object, and as subject contains its relation to the whole organism within it. This means, however, that the concept (as subject) is itself in its other (the sensory object) in many different ways – i.e. the subject both is and is not itself in its other. (To take an example: for the human hand as a subject-object unity the foot is an object with another subjectivity, although they are both part of the human body as a whole.) In so far as there is an identity in this self-division of the concept in the living organism, Hegel considers it under the concept of *pain*, which is for him an existing as opposed to a thought contradiction.²⁸ Pain – for Hegel a privilege (*Vorrecht*) of living beings – expresses the living organism's internal self-division, the division which causes it to encounter itself in its other as the negative of itself. Within the overall dialectic pain is necessary in so far as it stimulates the desire to overreach and assimilate objectivity.
- 2 The next point of interest in Hegel's discussion of the life process arises from the way he considers the relation of the subject to the objective world which it assimilates to itself. The main question he asks is: What makes it possible for the living as subject to interact with and assimilate to itself the non-living? The answer he gives is that it can only do so to the extent that the sphere of outer objectivity – which as such is indifferent to the approach of life – is already present in it. It thus exercises power over the objective world through its own outer or objective element, which is mechanical or chemical.²⁹ Of course to leave it at this does not solve the problem of the relation between the inner or subjective and the outer, since we then have to ask how the outer element of the living organism is assimilated to its inner element. In his answer to this question Hegel reveals himself to be the one-sided idealist that many have criticized him for being, by stating simply that it is the *concept* (rather than, say, some kind of vital force or fluid...) which overcomes the object and saturates it with its subjectivity.

The Species

The living organism is a contradiction, for Hegel, because it dies. It is contradictory because in its actual existence it is an individual, but in its subjectivity it persists only as the species. The living organism thus cannot win a victory as subject over its

species, which is consequently its master. Another way of putting this is as follows: a) a subject as such is always self-identical and it encounters the objective as its other; b) a living organism is a subject in its objectivity – i.e. its other; c) given that a living organism dies and is overwhelmed by the non-living, it cannot indefinitely maintain its identity in its other, so d) it is a contradiction because it both is itself in its other (as a subject in its objectivity) and is not itself in its other (as a subject distinct from or the causal agent acting upon its objectivity). It is hence the failure of life to unite fully self and other (or universal and particular in the individual) which manifests in the need to exist as a species and to reproduce.³⁰

Living organisms *qua living* are not, of course, yet self-conscious. This means that in so far as they unify subject and object, they only do so *in* and not *in and for* themselves. Thus in addition to their failure to overcome objectivity (i.e. their mortality), they do not really reach the status of proper subjects, since all subjectivity must, in the end, be grounded in absolute self-identity, in the $I = I$.³¹ Hegel attempts to realize the transition from life to cognition by arguing as follows:

- (i) The living individual is shown to persist as subjectivity over against objectivity in the form of the species only.³² (Hegel consequently calls the individual's own self-identity abstract.)
- (ii) This persistence of the species is supposed to represent the attainment of universality – i.e. it is as a universal (the species which as subjectivity subjugates objectivity) that life maintains itself.
- (iii) The species is, however, a universal only in itself (implicitly for us), and not yet for itself. The universal only becomes in and for itself in the process of cognition.

The category of life was supposed to be the first category of the Idea. In his discussion of the transition to cognition Hegel calls life the concept in its objectivity (this is the Idea in its immediacy), whereas cognition itself represents the concept in its subjectivity (this is the Idea as mediated or as judgement). The Absolute Idea is then supposed to unify the objective and subjective senses of Idea.

Here, then, is a brief outline of Hegel's conception of life in the *Logic*. Turning now to a criticism of it. This criticism will take the form of a series of arguments each of which is prefaced by an italicized statement of its major thesis. Each argument has some relation to the basic theme of the logic-ontology relation.

1 Hegel's Conception of Life is Both Logically and – By Implication at Least – Ontologically Incoherent

The first point to emphasize here is that Hegel introduces sensibility and related categories (pain, feeling) prematurely – i.e. his conception of life is over-determined. The capacity for sensation is not as such intrinsic to living organisms (plants are not sentient in any ordinary sense), and should consequently have been considered a distinct category with its own logic. (In his anthropology Hegel shows greater sensitivity to the difference between life and sentience. See chapter 6.)

A second point, already touched upon above, is Hegel's failure to consider the implications of the claim that there must be an identity underlying the difference between subjectivity (life) and objectivity (mechanism and chemism). The impli-

cation is that life is in fact a higher actuality of the chemical object itself. However, in the absence of an ontology to substantiate this, it remains an argument with unfulfilled promise. (Given that life is for Hegel a higher category than death – which holds sway over mechanical and chemical objects – a proper dialectic of life and death should see the latter being shown to be an illusion.³³)

Related to this latter point is one concerning the means-end relation considered in the discussion of the living individual. Here the following question arises: How does the inter-dependence of end and means in a living organism affect how we understand the objective matter which it assimilates to itself in the process of growth? That is: if a leaf is both end and means, are the parts of the leaf – e.g. ultimately its basic material constituents – also both end and means? At some point in the discussion of a leaf's structure, a level of description will be reached that reverts to the logic of chemism, and so loses – in the absence of an ontology distinctive of life – the principle of subjectivity embedded in the means-end relation.³⁴

A final crucial point concerns the role played by the category of species in Hegel's argument. This is supposed to achieve universality in but not for itself. Given, however, that relative to the living individual, the species is a mere abstraction, there is no way in which it can be considered a proper sublation of the individual. The species does not exist. It is individuals which exist. What this suspect transition in Hegel's argument demonstrates is the failure to conceive a genuine sublation of the contradiction manifested in the life-death opposition, which should be basic to a logic of life. Once again it is clear that this is related to the absence of an ontology of life. Such an ontology would have made a full-blooded conception of immortality conceivable in showing that mechanical and chemical objects are not just logically, but also ontologically derivative of – in the end – absolute subjectivity.

2 Hegel's Conception of Life Results in Contradictory Interpretations of His Thought Which Cannot be Reconciled

Amongst the contradictory theses that can be attributed to Hegel as a result of his consideration of life are the following:³⁵

- (i) The subjective element of life, its soul as Hegel calls it, does not persist beyond the death of the individual living organism, despite the fact that it is supposed to be distinct from the objective element which it masters.
- (ii) This subjective element is also called the concept, which Hegel says elsewhere is eternal. Although eternal,³⁶ it is supposed to have actuality only for the embodied individual. If the human species were destroyed, the concept would presumably no longer persist for Hegel – though this claim is itself contradicted by the thought that logic represents the mind of God prior to the creation. (A more substantial conception of the Absolute than one which presupposes nature is required by the overall logic of Hegel's system, as will be demonstrated.) Because Hegel does not relate spirit and nature satisfactorily, this question cannot be resolved by him.

In general it can be said that Hegel's consideration of the subject-object and inner-outer distinctions in relation to life is quite vague and confused.³⁷ The reason for this

is actually disarmingly simple: despite having a profound logical apparatus for considering life, Hegel could not actually apply it to the phenomenon in hand – with the result that concepts like the vital agent and the soul remain mere apparitions in his argument. This is perhaps the reason why he introduces concepts like sensibility and pain into his discussion, since they would give his reader a very immediate and intuitive sense of the inner as opposed to the outer (of inner against outer sense in Kantian language) in the absence of an ontology of life to do this work for him. In brief, then, he over-determines the category of life logically, because it is under-determined ontologically.

3 *Hegel's Mention of the Notions of Absolute Difference and Absolute Contradiction in his Discussion of Sensibility and Life Testify to an Unresolved Dualism Within his Thought*

Hegel calls sensibility a moment of 'absolute difference'.³⁸ This, however, implies that there is no genuine sublation of sensibility; that an ultimate victory over the pain of embodiment cannot be won. Against this, a completed dialectic would show how pain could be sublated fully – i.e. made the instrument of true self-knowledge and self-overcoming.³⁹ (The possibility of such an *Aufhebung* would imply that the sphere of sensibility is itself logically – and so also ontologically – derivative of a more fundamental realm, i.e. the logic and corresponding ontology of the world of thought, within which it must be contained.⁴⁰) On the one hand one is happy to see Hegel make statements which seem to give the sphere of the given or the percept an irreducible otherness (which it of course has in Kant's thought), since they water down considerably the otherwise one-sidedly idealistic thrust of his system. On the other hand they seem to threaten this system's basic intelligibility – i.e. the idea that the Absolute can be conceived at all.

Before moving to cognition, let us briefly reconsider Hegel's relation to Kant. It was shown above that Kant thought the sphere of life to be unknowable, owing a) to the fact that all knowledge of appearances presupposes but cannot explain sensibility, and b) to the claim that our knowledge of nature is constrained to the exercise of the understanding, which analyses nature, but cannot know its phenomena as unfolding, structurally unified wholes. Kant's argument against our ability to know life is hence primarily epistemological. What we see Hegel attempt is to understand life in a way which bypasses the questions of Kantian epistemology altogether.⁴¹ The question of the ground of sensibility should have been a very fundamental one for Hegel, but instead we see it introduced as a sub-category of a logical (or logico-metaphysical) discussion of life, in which it occupies a subservient position on an implicit ontological chain whose very earliest links – e.g. the mechanical and chemical conceptions of the object – must, as Kant would have argued, already presuppose it.⁴²

Hegel's claim that sensibility gives us a moment of absolute difference should thus really be seen as the spectre of Kantian dualism – of an as yet unknown other – coming back to haunt him. And it is a spectre that returns because, as Hegel himself insists, the philosopher is a servant of the truth and in no way its arbitrary creator.⁴³

5.2 Cognition

In the discussions of teleology and life reasons have been found for having serious misgivings about the order in which Hegel develops some of his categories and about their true systematic status. In his consideration of the idea of cognition, any semblance of a genuinely dialectical development is lost. This is already reflected in the basic form of the chapter, which is prefaced by an introduction to the idea of knowing and then divided into only two main sections: the idea of truth, in which Hegel considers analytical and synthetic knowing, and the idea of the good, the sphere of practical cognition. (It is to the supposed synthesis of these, discovered by Hegel in speculative reason, that he gives the name Absolute Idea.)

Hegel begins his discussion of cognition by considering and criticizing Kant's conception of the transcendental unity of apperception. He makes two main points: a) that Kant argues with justification against hypostatizing the self into some kind of thing, but also b) that Kant's conception of the 'I think' as a subject missing its corresponding object is a barbarism, since the I as subject must have itself for its object. (These points have already been considered in chapters 1 to 3. See especially 3.2.) Hegel then criticizes Kant's limiting knowledge to the sphere of appearances by claiming that the appearances have no more truth in them than is given through the concept into which they pass. What is supposed to have demonstrated this is the logic of life just considered: 'In life we find the reality of the Idea as individual, the species is the universal or what is inner. The truth of life... is the sublation of the immediate individual in the form of its self-identity as species. This Idea is Spirit'.⁴⁴

Hegel hence makes three claims concerning the transition from life to cognition:

- a) It is given by the sublation of the living individual by the category of species.
- b) It sees the universality of the species which is a universality for itself become the universality in and for itself of self-consciousness, of the I which thinks itself and in so doing reveals the absolute nature of the concept. (See chapter 3.) It is this self which encounters the world as something other and which seeks to cognize it in the search for the true and the good.
- c) The sublation of the species in the form of self-consciousness signals the appearance of spirit. These claims raise the following questions:
 - (i) Is the transition from the universality of the species to the absolute universality (i.e. individuality) of self-consciousness justified?
 - (ii) What are the implications of this transition for the ontological status of the self, and in what sense, if any, does the self presuppose the preceding categories of the *Logic*?
 - (iii) What is implied by the appearance at this point in the *Logic* of the category of Spirit, given that the whole sphere of Spirit is already sublated at the beginning of the *Logic*? What does Hegel mean by Spirit here?

It was argued in the previous section that the category of species fails to sublate the living individual. The main reasons for this are a) that it succeeds only at the expense of the living individual (i.e. the immanent, finite unity of subjectivity and objectivity), thus on the assumption that the agent of life cannot in principle sublate mechanical

and chemical matter; and b) it does not consider sensibility as an intermediate category between life and cognition. Of course the obvious reason why Hegel makes the transition as he does, is that he seeks to defend the view that the Absolute is thought (this, as was shown in the introduction to this chapter, is already presupposed at the very beginning of the *Logic*), and for this a reason needs to be discovered to deny that the sensory world has an as yet unmediated epistemological and ontological status. The cost of this position, however, is that life gains no proper victory over death and that the whole material world ends up becoming alienated from thought. (This results in the ambiguities surrounding the logic-ontology relation considered in chapter 4. Further ambiguities that result will be considered shortly.)

If, however, sensibility had been the higher category to emerge from life, then cognition (which humans have but animals do not) would have to have been shown to overcome the contradictions of sensation (which animals have but plants do not). Now although ordinary cognition in the Kantian sense (in which the intelligible and sensory are synthesized) certainly represents a partial sublation of the sensory world (and so a unification of subjectivity and objectivity), for experience itself the subject-object opposition remains – in spite of the achievements of pure thought – a given.

A proper sublation of objectivity from the Kantian perspective would require complete knowledge of the relation between transcendental and empirical conditions of experience or of the relation between understanding and sensibility (and so of the relation between mind and body). (See chapter 1.) Only with such knowledge could the sensory world itself be demonstrated to be, in reality, absolute (i.e. $I = I$), as it was argued in chapter 3 that it must be. Given that Hegel thought himself to have sublated sensibility (or the category of the percept) in the *Phenomenology*, the concept of cognition as here conceived is of no interest to him. (It was argued in chapter 2, however, that Hegel throughout presupposes but never explains sensibility in the *Phenomenology*.) His only other justification for this lack of interest – and so for conceiving Absolute Knowing to be achieved in pure thought – is the suspect transition from life to cognition, in which sensibility (which like Hegel's account of life is ontologically under-determined) is never given a proper consideration.

To summarize: Hegel achieves the transition from life to cognition and eventually to the thesis that thinking and being are one by unjustifiably renouncing the concept of the concrete individual as the absolute unity of subject and object. This unity should have been conceived as a full ontological sublation of the sensory world as a whole, which is an end for which the concept of resurrection will be shown to be fitting (see chapter 7). This renunciation has two aspects: a) the claim that the species – a mere abstraction – is the resolution of the contradictory logic of life, and b) the (implicit) claim that pure, sense-free thought sublates the world of the sensory intuitions. Although the discovery of the absolute subject within thought demonstrates the possibility of such a sublation, to achieve it in actual fact would require a greatly expanded conception of being.

Moving to the second question: What are the ontological implications of this transition for Hegel's conception of the self? If the determination of life is, as it should be, retained in the transition to cognition, then, given that the self is eternal and absolute (see 3.2), this self should be immortal. (The capacity for death can only be a determination of an object still subservient to mechanical and chemical objectivity. The self – as an absolute unity of subject and object – transcends this objectivity completely.)

Hegel, however, never emphasizes this. The reason for this is that throughout his writings there is an unresolved tension between two basic conceptions of the self:

- (i) The empirical and social self, which for Hegel emerges historically from more primitive states of being (see chapter 6). This is the self considered in the *Phenomenology* prior to the attainment of absolute knowing.
- (ii) The absolute self or I = I of the *Logic*. This is intrinsically absolute and so is incapable of being generated at all. (It should thus also be transcendent for the finite, empirical individual, as is Aristotle's *noesis noeseos*.)

When emphasis is placed on the first of these, this is the natural consequence of considering spirit (and particularly phenomenology) a presupposition of logic; when on the second it is a consequence of considering logic a presupposition of spirit. The first Hegel tends, correspondingly, to conceive as mortal, finite, temporal and conditioned (e.g. socially), the second as immortal, infinite, eternal and absolute. What the above discussion of the transition from life to cognition helps to show us is why Hegel could not reconcile them. To be reconciled, it would have to be shown in detail how an empirical self (i.e. an embodied individual) comes to be constituted transcendently from the Absolute, how I, this particular individual, really am I. This, however, would require a demonstration of how the material world of mechanical and chemical objects (or their modern physical equivalents) is constituted from logically and ontologically more fundamental levels of being, including levels intrinsic to life, sentience and ultimately thought. (Such a demonstration would be a genuine synthesis of transcendentalism and dialectic. For a sketch of how it might be conceived, see chapter 7.) It is Hegel's failure to recognize this need which results in the hasty and non-dialectical transition from life to cognition.

Turning, then, to the last question: what is the position of Spirit in the *Logic*? Hegel intends the concept of Spirit to apply to cognition in the logical sense only – i.e. in the sense in which it has been practised throughout the *Logic* itself. As a result, he says that the different concrete appearances which this category makes – i.e. as anthropology or a consideration of the soul, as phenomenology or a consideration of the forms of spirit (of cognition in so far as it is related to sensibility), and as psychology – are of no relevance to the *Logic*. But surely it can be argued that these concrete appearances can themselves be conceived in the logical sense, just as are mechanism, chemism and teleology. Indeed, is this not what Hegel's system taken as a whole attempts to do?

This question returns us to the earlier discussion of the overall form of Hegel's system; of how its different parts fit together. Specifically, it asks for a proper examination of the difference between 'pure science' and the philosophies of nature and spirit. I will not discuss this question in any detail here, since it arises again in a more suitable context in chapter 6. For now, however, the following can be said:

- (i) Hegel defends the view that spirit does not need to be considered in its immanent forms in the *Logic* because it has the path through spirit already behind it, or, he says 'what is the same thing, in front of it – the former in so far as logic is taken to be the last science, the latter in so far as it is taken to be the first'.⁴⁵ This argument fails, however, owing to the circularity (the bad infinity) pointed out at the introduction of this chapter.⁴⁶

- (ii) It is an internal requirement of Hegel's system that spirit should be the category (the middle term) which unifies nature and logic. Chapter 4 has already shown, however, that Hegel is unable to demonstrate how the natural world might be unified with the human – i.e. shown to be, in a deeper sense, human or a manifestation of spirit. In the current discussion this failure manifests as the failure to unify logic and spirit properly, since this is the relation at issue in the transition from life to cognition. How, for example, are life and the self really related? If the self is absolute or $I = I$, then life must be logically posterior to it. But this would mean that the self is a presupposition, not a product of spirit.

Turning, then, to Hegel's treatment of cognition itself. Two categories comprise the main part of Hegel's argument: the true and the good. In the discussion of the true Hegel considers the analytical and synthetic methods of thought, both of which he calls finite. Very briefly, analysis proceeds by taking its object as passively given and breaking it down into constituent elements. The barest of features common to objects are then given expression in the language of the universal. (The paradigm of a metaphysics of the analytical method is provided by the Empiricists.) Synthesis moves in the other direction by beginning with an active definition or a very general truth and then drawing out its implications in the form of less general truths. (A paradigmatic example of the synthetic method turned into metaphysics is Spinoza.)

Analysis and synthesis presuppose one another in that in both we are considering the relations between more and less general concepts. In analysis we begin with the least general, in synthesis with the most. It is only through the speculative method – which, grounded in Hegel's treatment of the syllogism, unifies analysis and synthesis by providing a complete circle of categories – that we are able to begin with the most general concept, being, and pass from there through the details of its self-determination, returning in the notion of the Absolute Idea to the immediate being of pure thought from which we began – and from which the system is supposed to pass into nature.

The other category of cognition is that of the good. One is reminded by its position in Hegel's discussion of the distinction Aristotle makes between the two forms of *eudaimon* life: that of the man of moral insight, the *phronimos*, and that of the philosopher, *theoria*. Like Aristotle, Hegel considers the latter to be the higher form, though unlike Aristotle – who showed greater metaphysical respect for the world of the senses – he attempts quite unsatisfactorily to unify them. (This will be considered further shortly.) The concept of the good is the end not of theoretical cognition, but of practical cognition, of the exercise of the will. Like the theoretical cognition which is confined to the analytical or synthetic methods, however, it is finite in that it cannot achieve its end, which is to unite what is and what ought to be – i.e. to realize the good (or what might be called the New Jerusalem) in the world itself. Rather than recognizing that the good had not been united with nature as a whole but that this should still be man's artistic aim (as did, for example, Hegel's contemporary, the Romantic poet and writer of sublime philosophical fragments, Novalis⁴⁷), Hegel presses on to the Absolute Idea in which this unity is apparently achieved.

5.3 The Absolute Idea

If the reader of Hegel's *Logic* expected to arrive at the category of the Absolute Idea accompanied by hosts of singing angels, he would have been disappointed, since it turns out that the content most richly expressive of that category has already been digested in previous books and chapters of the *Logic*. The category of the Absolute Idea does not so much give us new insights into the basic logic of reality as show this Idea recognizing itself for what it is and has been: 'the absolute and all truth', or the 'Idea which thinks itself'⁴⁸. It is no resurrected Christ, no blazing feast of light and love, in other words, but the ultimate self-affirmation of philosophy – of pure thought thinking itself – with which Hegel's account achieves its result.

Hegel considered his notion of the Absolute Idea, the synthesis of the true and the good, to have captured the full richness of Aristotle's *noesis noeseos*. Thus 'the Absolute Idea alone is being, eternal life, self-knowing truth and all truth'.⁴⁹ Despite the reverence for 'The Philosopher' which this gesture by the pretender to his crown displays, it does an injustice to Aristotle's much grander, more cosmic and – given man's comparative finitude – less human deity. Aristotle's God thinks his own essence continuously and so is eternal in the proper sense: 'We say', says Aristotle, 'that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God'.⁵⁰ Hegel's God, by contrast, is too soon unified with man, leaving the unresolved tension between man's finite, empirical self and the truly infinite I am I. Does this God then turn to dust when the vessel of his self-knowing relinquishes its earthly form? As a mystical logician in his sense, Hegel should have wanted to reply 'no'. However, the ontological under-determination of his thought leaves him no real alternative, and therein lies its central contradiction.

A truer reconciliation of man and God would be the demonstration that man's will is able to unify itself with the will of nature in a ceaseless pure loving, in a genuine creative selflessness or world-affirming realization of the I am I. Only here would what is, the true, and what ought to be, the good, be unified.

5.4 Conclusion

This completes the consideration of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. It remains for the main conclusions to be summarized.

Hegel's *Science of Logic* is an attempt to think the unity of being and thinking as a unity of subject and object. As such it begins with the category of being and ends with that of the Absolute Idea, in which this unity is ostensibly achieved. I believe that it has been shown above beyond any possible disagreement at the general level why it fails to achieve this end. The main theses have been the following:

- 1 There is an unresolved tension in the relation between logic and ontology in Hegel's *Logic*, and in the *Logic of the Concept* in particular.
- 2 This unresolved tension has two main sources: a) Hegel's failure to recognize the need to consider an ontology of life capable of realizing its logic – the most obvious symptom of this is the unhappy position of such concepts as 'vital agent' and 'soul' in Hegel's conception, and b) his incoherent conception of sensibility,

which should have played a much more important role in his conception of the logic of the subject-object opposition than it does.

- 3 The consequence of these tensions is a series of unresolved contradictions or antinomies. These can be stated in the form of a set of questions, none of which Hegel is able on his own terms to answer satisfactorily:

- (i) In virtue of what are living organisms alive?
- (ii) Does the world of material objects exist independently of the mind or the idea, or does it not?
- (iii) In what sense are the categories of the *Logic* constitutive of our experience, as they are in Kant?
- (iv) Does nature arise out of the idea (or spirit), or does the idea arise out of nature? Hegel very clearly wants to defend the former,⁵¹ but his argument remains a merely unrealized hope.
- (v) How is absolute subjectivity actually realized in the world of sensory matter?
- (vi) How does the world form a single set of inter-linked syllogisms which culminate in the Absolute Idea?
- (vii) Is the absolute subject or I = I ultimately transcendent for man when he is not actualizing the Absolute Idea, as is Aristotle's *noesis noeseos* or self-thinking thought, or is the I constituted by a human act of judgement? Thus: is this I absolute or does it presuppose some kind of mediation?

Hegel's ambivalence on this latter question is clearly related to the failure to unify the empirical and absolute conceptions of the self. Yet if it is argued – as, building on Hegel, I did in chapter 3 – that an I as subject *can only be an I in having itself for its object*, then such an I must, from the finite human perspective, also exist transcendentally, since it could not constitute itself from a duality of subject and object. As subject it must always also be the object. (This does not mean that it could not orchestrate the conditions under which an opposition between subject and object, between the self and empirical world arises for a self-consciousness. It simply means that in itself it must always have itself for its object.)

- 4 The basic form of Hegel's *Logic of the Concept* is flawed. This manifests in, foremost, the inadequate transitions in his argument a) from chemism to teleology, and b) from life to cognition, and c) from cognition to the Absolute Idea. All three of these transitions can be diagnosed in terms of Hegel's failure to deal adequately with the sensory world.
- 5 Most fundamentally, the ontological under-determination of Hegel's *Logic* can be seen as resulting in the vicious circularity of his system (as opposed to the virtuous circularity Hegel sought). The most obvious symptom of this circularity is the impossibility of giving Hegel's system a proper beginning. (See also chapter 6.)

The inability to give satisfactory answers to the questions of (3) means that Hegel was in the end an unwitting dualist, and that he thus failed to meet the challenges to the project of knowing which Kant implicitly laid down. Like the consciousness of sense-certainty, we might say, his system wanted to be or *meant* something that it is not. Just

as consciousness intended the particular but only attained the universal in sense-certainty, so Hegel's system *intends* to present the truth as a single, whole system, but attains only a limited idea of such a whole – i.e. the inverse of its actuality.⁵² And just as in the case of sense-certainty, it is language which knows better, since no amount of speculative bullying will persuade its concepts that thought alone achieves a fully mediated unity of subject and object. What this of course means, is that dialectic must continue. Before moving beyond Hegel, however, a further set of concepts he develops will be considered, which will make it easier to show how its next step should be taken.

Notes

- 1 *Enc. Logic* §213.
- 2 *Werke 2 (Jenaer Schriften)*.
- 3 What we also see here is Hegel's failure to conceive a proper Trinitarian theology. It will be argued below that what is missing above all in Hegel is a satisfactory logic of the second person of the Trinity.
- 4 Even then we should still have the difficulty of understanding how logic passes into nature.
- 5 This again raises the question of the beginning of Hegel's system, since the *Logic* can be no true beginning if it presupposes the *Phenomenology*.
- 6 It is worth mentioning here that the self present at the very beginning of the *Phenomenology* enters into sensory consciousness unexplained when it actualizes the higher potency of the soul, transforming it into consciousness. There will be further discussion of the position of the self in Hegel's argument in both the Cognition section of this chapter and in chapter 6. It will be argued that the major shortcoming of Hegel's conception is that he is unable to relate satisfactorily the logical and the historical/genetic accounts of the self.
- 7 *Enc. Logic* §214.
- 8 See *WdL II*, p. 472; Miller L, p. 763; Glock, 5: 247.
- 9 See *WdL II*, page 477; Miller L, p. 767; Glock, 5: 252. The unreferenced concepts in this list occur several times between pages 467 and 487 (Miller L, pp. 758–774, Glock, 241–262).
- 10 Such comments see Hegel's deeply seated constitutional need to think the whole (what Sloterdijk has called philosophy's 'transference love towards the whole') overriding his obvious failure in certain contexts to do so.
- 11 What is meant by 'implicit' here is a relation of containment in which a subsequent term provides a more complete logic of the world than its predecessor. A modern example of this relation is the claim that quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity provide a more complete logic of reality that does Newtonian physics.
- 12 This thought of course sits very happily with the claim that the possibility of resurrecting a physical body is a basic result of dialectical logic. It will be argued below that Hegel's failure to provide a proper dialectic of the life-death relation (which also manifests as an inadequate conception of the mind-body relation) is what prevents his philosophical logic from being properly Christo-centric – i.e. what leaves it as an incomplete logic of the third person of the Trinity, of a *Geist* that is greater than and has not yet completely unified itself with man. (The symbol of this unity in the Bible is the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus when he is baptized as the Christ or the Son of God. Its full realization is represented as the New Jerusalem of the Revelation of St John.) The discussion of a level of

- being that might realize the logic implicit in the life-death relation will have to wait until chapter 7.
- 13 *WdL* II, p. 480; Miller L, p. 769; Glock, 5: 256
 - 14 This is one of many examples in Hegel's discussion of life where a niggling or uneasy ambiguity in his use of concepts can be felt.
 - 15 Aristotle's account of the relation between the four elements and both *pneuma* and vital heat suffers a similar tension. In chapter 6 of my work on Aristotle I argue that a proper dialectical consideration of this relation would have required the ordinary four elements to have been contained within the fifth.
 - 16 Life has of course created an escape-hatch for itself in the form of reproduction, but this maintains only the species – i.e. a succession of individuals – and not the actuality of the species or the living organism itself. Even species, as we now well know, are capable of becoming extinct at the individual, physical level. Hegel's consideration of the category of 'species' will be discussed shortly.
 - 17 *Enc. Logic*, §216.
 - 18 *Enc. Logic*, Zusatz to §219.
 - 19 See *WdL* II, p. 476; Miller L, p. 766; Glock, 5: 251. Hegel criticizes the whole-part relation in the discussion of Appearance in the *Logic of Essence*.
 - 20 See *WdL* II, p. 477; Miller L, p. 767; Glock, 5: 252.
 - 21 Hegel considers this relation of the whole to the parts of a living organism in the language of the syllogism: 'A living being is a syllogism, of which the very elements are in themselves systems and syllogisms. They are, however, active syllogisms or processes; and in the subjective unity of the vital agent make only one process.' *Enc. Logic*, §217.
 - 22 One might be tempted at this stage to be drawn into a discussion of the merits and demerits of the neo-Darwinian mechanical model of self-creation or autopoiesis. This is, however, matter for another discussion. In the current one pride of place will be given to Hegelian logic over empirical considerations. The neo-Darwinist obviously holds a model of the object in his mind that is mechanical (or at best chemical) in the Hegelian sense and so very far from being able to account for subjectivity. In the discussion of Steiner a better sense will be gained of how the neo-Darwinist model might be extended to include an expanded anthropological ontology.
 - 23 *WdL* II, p. 478; Miller L, p. 768; Glock, 5: 253.
 - 24 It will be argued that the notion of absolute difference in application to the notion of sensibility reflects both a residual dualism in Hegel's thought, and the *Logic's* ontological shortcomings, including especially the ambiguity in the logic-ontology relation discussed above. In the notion of sensibility as a sphere of absolute difference, Hegel seems to readmit a basic Kantian thought into his system: that identity, in the form of thought, is in some sense imposed on sensibility from without. It will be shown that this thought demonstrates a tacit admission – though buried so deeply and obscurely within Hegel's system that he remained unaware of it himself and its implications are never developed – of the impossibility, on the terms conceived by Hegel, of realizing a true identity of subject and object and so a full-blooded notion of the Absolute.
 - 25 *Philosophy of Nature*, §354.
 - 26 In the philosophy of nature Hegel considers these three moments mainly in relation to a living organism's anatomical and physiological structure. Here in the *Logic* there is an ambiguity as to whether physiology or an animal's capacity for sentience is the object of consideration. The way Hegel speaks about sensibility suggests the latter, which would show that he here fails to differentiate physiology and sentience (or the empirical and the transcendental) satisfactorily.
 - 27 Hegel's ambiguity on this point will be considered shortly.

- 28 See *WdL* II, p. 481; Miller L, p. 770; Glock, 5: 257. This claim offers a clear example of a persisting dualism between thought and existence, and it appears precisely where we should expect it to, namely in relation to sensations.
- 29 See *WdL* II, p. 482; Miller L, p. 771; Glock, 5: 258.
- 30 As a result of this, Hegel says that the living individual is caught in a bad infinity or an endless regress. It is most truly itself or actual as an individual, but this individual is subservient to the species, and it is only the species – a relative abstraction – which persists. A proper infinity (for Hegel one which unites the infinite and the finite) involving the category of life, would be one in which the living individual sublated or overcame matter as its inalienable other. (The notion of a resurrected body offers such an infinity.) If Hegel had conceived of species evolution at the bodily as well as, for humans, the spiritual level, this would have helped him to overcome the bad infinity in which he finds life caught. Such a conception is to be found in seed form at least in Goethe's notion of polarity and intensification, which sees the self-differentiation and division of living organisms through growth as a means of enriching the species form through the assimilation of new characteristics. A notion of evolution would also, however, refute Hegel's claim that the concept of species signifies the victory of universality over the individual and show the reverse to be true: namely that individuality is the truth of universality. That Hegel should have argued this anyway will shortly be defended.
- 31 This conclusion is more implicit than explicit in Hegel's argument, and it will shortly be argued that it ought to have been more explicit.
- 32 The interaction between an acid and a base saw the subjectivity of each disappear in the product of their interaction, the salt. The reproductive interaction between two living organisms, by contrast, sees another exemplar of this organism itself produced. i.e. the identities of the original substance – in so far as they exemplify a species – are not lost.
- 33 Such a dialectic would also show how means and end could be truly unified – i.e. show that the matter encountered by a subject as objective is a means to the realization of a consciously achieved unity of subject and object, or freedom. Needless to say it is inconceivable in the absence of an expanded ontology.
- 34 We might still be able to say that e.g. the DNA in every leaf cell is both an end (e.g. of the plant's desire to reproduce) and a means (e.g. it selects for the conditions under which such properties as a petal's colours are realized), but can we say this for the relations between the basic chemical substances that make up the DNA? Even in the case of DNA, the modern biologist is tempted to say that the ends it realizes are in no way intrinsic to the DNA itself *as ends*. The plant's desire to reproduce, for example, is understood as nothing more than the fact that it is able to replicate itself as a machine.
- 35 The important point is that there is no way to harmonize these theses on Hegel's own terms, making it irrelevant to try to defend one or other as being closer to his true views. The bottom line is that his true views are themselves contradictory.
- 36 See *WdL* II, p. 490; Miller L, p. 777; Glock, 5: 266.
- 37 A symptom of this is that it is not obvious how the discussion of the individual organism's relation to the objective world considered under irritability differs greatly from that considered more generally under the life process.
- 38 As Inwood points out in his *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 28–9 two main senses of 'absolute' are to be distinguished in Hegel: the first includes mediation and the sublation of conditions (e.g. absolute spirit or the absolute idea), the second excludes them. It is the second of these which Hegel extends to sensibility. This distinction is itself an unresolved dualism in Hegel.
- 39 The idea of a resurrection following a crucifixion can be conceived as an allegory of a sublation of pain and sensibility.

- 40 Steiner distinguishes the soul-world (or astral world) of the sphere of sensibility from the spirit-world (or, following the Theosophists, Devachan) which corresponds to thought. Sensibility could only be a sphere of absolute difference if it did not ultimately descend or crystallize from a more fundamental reality, which in Steiner's cosmology it does. See also chapter 7.
- 41 The most important symptom – to be considered in chapter 6 – of this attempt is the comparatively weak position occupied by the imagination in Hegel's account of knowledge. Kant's 'hidden art in the depths of the soul' by means of which the intelligible and sensible are united is considered only very superficially by Hegel in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, p. 592 (*Werke* 20: 347f; Glock, 19: 569f.). (We might say here that Hegel is so focused on the logic of the concept that he underplays the importance of the concept-percept relation.)
- 42 This argument will be developed further in chapter 6.
- 43 This should not take away from the idea that human beings are able to create truths as artists. What must be recognized is that such creative activity (whether in the sphere of thought or outside of it) presupposes the many constitutive conditions of human experience – which I am trying to conceive within the horizon of an expanded ontology, and which Hegel conceives through speculative logic – that lie beyond this experience itself.
- 44 *WdL* II, p. 494; Miller L, p. 780; Glock, 5.270.
- 45 *WdL* II, p. 496; Miller L, p. 782; Glock, 5: 272. My translation.
- 46 The bad infinity of Hegel's whole system can be seen as structurally identical to that of his conception of life. The shortcoming of his non-evolutionary conception of life is that beginning and end are always the same. The cycle is thus in many ways a mechanical one. Given the position of Hegel's *Logic*, the same applies to the system as a whole. The general tendency of systems (or some of their elements) which have a broadly dialectical structure to result in such bad infinities can also be found in Aristotle, who falls into such an infinity in his attempt to answer the question of the nature of man's actuality. He vacillates between a) its being his end, and b) its being his father. The latter results in an endless regress. The former Aristotle could not fulfil ontologically.
- 47 See e.g. fragment 541 of his collected works.
- 48 *Enc. Logic* §236.
- 49 *WdL* II, p. 549; Miller L, p. 824; Glock, 5.328.
- 50 Meta. 1072b29.
- 51 See e.g. Hegel's discussion of spirit in part 3 of the *Encyclopaedia*. At §381 Hegel says 'For us, spirit has nature as its presupposition. It is the truth of nature, and therefore, its absolute prius'. He then argues (see the Zusatz to the same section) that in reality 'it is nature which is posited by spirit, spirit being the absolute prius'.
- 52 Mure echoes these sentiments: '[Hegel] seems to offer us the infinite and fob us off with the finite...' (1950), p. 344.

Chapter 6

Soul between Body and Spirit in Hegel

Hegel considers the soul and the soul-body relation in his philosophical anthropology, the first major section of the first division of part 3 of his *Encyclopaedia*. This anthropology succeeds the last category of the philosophy of nature, Organics, and immediately precedes the *Encyclopaedia* phenomenology. It is thus supposed to cover the entire sphere of human nature which lies between man considered as a purely natural being and his spiritual nature. (The latter enters the soul, says Hegel, like a flash of lightning, giving unity to it and precipitating the spiritual development which is described by phenomenology.¹) The anthropology has three main categories: the natural, feeling and actual souls. These encompass a very broad selection of topics, including the differences between cultures; childhood and the ages of man; habit, sleep and dreaming; sensation and the different senses; the language of gestures and in general the use of the body as an instrument of the soul; the many nuances of the life of feeling; the different forms of insanity and their cures and, for the purposes of this book the most interesting and important discussion of all (as well as the longest in Hegel's text), the nature of animal magnetism and clairvoyance.

Since my interest is in the fundamental philosophical questions arising from what Hegel says, only a few of the many phenomena he considers will be discussed.² Once again, the discussion will have a broadly critical tone, but this is only because its overall aim is to extend the legacy of Hegel's thought into areas in which his own arguments – concerning the nature of the soul and the nature-spirit divide which it spans – have been either long abandoned or simply ignored by the more recent philosophical traditions.

The main theses it defends are:

- (i) Hegel's anthropology is largely a descriptive, categorizing exercise, with limited overall philosophical value. The main reasons for this are associated, once again, with questions of ontology.
- (ii) The position of Hegel's anthropology within his system clearly demonstrates this system's overall incoherence.
- (iii) Hegel's discussion of animal magnetism and other phenomena of clairvoyance give the clearest indications of where his system encounters its conceptual limits. These phenomena also point in the direction of possible ways of extending the Hegelian project.
- (iv) Hegel's philosophical anthropology and psychology are in important ways inferior to those of Aristotle.
- (v) Hegel considers the body to be the predicate of the soul. If this claim is taken as a logical one, and if its dialectical implications are considered, then it has an ontological potential which Hegel does not actualize.

- (vi) Hegel's conception of the soul in general demands an ontological basis which he is never able to give it. As a result he is unable to qualify adequately such claims as that the soul is immaterial.
- (vii) Hegel calls the soul a microcosm and thus revives an idea widespread in medieval thought and the occult tradition. However, he does not do this concept's philosophical potential justice.
- (viii) Hegel's conception of the imagination – to be found in his discussion of psychology – shows very clearly where he failed to absorb certain crucial elements of the transcendental turn that had led to Kant's scepticism about our ability to know the mind (soul) – body relation.

How, then, does Hegel conceive the relation between body and soul? As a dialectician (or a speculative thinker), Hegel cannot admit a substantial soul-body dualism. As a result he gives the soul in general the status of the universal, and the body of the particular, their unity – which is ultimately the unity of thought and reality³ – being individual. Despite this monism, however, Hegel concedes that we are fully in our rights to speak about a soul-body distinction. To reconcile these two claims Hegel develops a notion of the soul which is in many ways similar to that of Aristotle, whose philosophical psychology he esteemed more highly than that of any other philosopher. The soul, says Hegel, is the ideality of the body (just as for Aristotle it is the body's form). As a consequence it is 'no separate immaterial entity' of the kind conceived by Descartes and many of his contemporaries.⁴ The soul realizes its nature in and through the body, saturating the latter with its characteristic qualities at every point, making it into its own, just as the vital agent of life assimilates mechanical and chemical matter to itself.⁵ However, the soul is not in any sense material or a by-product of the body, but rather what Hegel calls 'the universal immateriality of Nature'.⁶

Soul and body are thus to be conceived as a unity. This, however, raises the obvious question: can the soul exist in any form without the body? It was pointed out in the discussion of the *Logic* that Hegel calls soul and body 'different ingredients', and that at death the soul 'flees the body'. However, his anthropology makes it clear that Hegel does not intend this 'fleeing' in any kind of concrete sense (though as will be seen, he could have had quite good reasons for doing so). Yet if the soul does not survive the death of the body, it is difficult to see how Hegel can maintain the claims he makes about its universality and immateriality. If the soul stands to the body as the universal to the particular, then given that for Hegel the particular is the self-externalization of the universal, the death of the body – i.e. the withdrawal of life from it – surely cannot be the death of the soul. That it cannot be follows also from Hegel's claim that spirit (i.e. the universal) is the absolute prius, nature (the particular) being derivative of it. (Hegel thus says: 'the soul emerges as the ideality of everything material, as all immateriality, so that everything called matter, no matter how much it conveys to ordinary thinking the illusory appearance of independence, is known to have no independence from mind'.⁷)

Hegel thus wants to say that soul and body, just as spirit and matter, form a unity⁸ This is the demand made by dialectic against the rigid distinctions of the understanding. In the following discussion I will demonstrate both how he attempts and how he fails to satisfy this demand. I follow the structure of Hegel's considerations in dividing this chapter into three sections: the natural, feeling and actual souls.

6.1 The Natural Soul

For Hegel the soul emerges gradually. From the dumb sleep of dead matter it begins its ascent towards spirit in the form of the ‘universal life of nature’. This is the soul still submerged in the basic rhythms of the earth and the cosmos (i.e. telluric and sidereal influences), and Hegel introduces it by making the following analogy: ‘Just as light bursts asunder into an infinite host of stars, so too does the universal natural soul sunder itself into an infinite host of individual souls; only with this difference, that whereas light appears to have an existence independently of the stars, the universal natural soul attains actuality solely in the individual souls’.⁹ This formulation immediately takes us to the heart of the difficulties surrounding Hegel’s conception of the natural soul. How can this soul be universal on the one hand – Hegel even calls it the *anima mundi* – yet exist only in individual human beings?¹⁰ What, in this case, is the relation between the universal and the individual?

The examples Hegel gives to illustrate the nature and extension of the natural soul accentuate this problem further. These include:

- a) The phenomenon of living in sympathy with nature, which Hegel says is still widespread in ‘less intellectually emancipated nations’. This manifests as the rare capacity – in which nature dominates spirit – to have ‘marvellous prophetic vision of coming conditions and of events arising therefrom’.¹¹ (Hegel also considers lunacy as a victory of spirit over nature.)
- b) The use of oracles and other forms of divination in ancient and primitive societies. Hegel cites the apparent capacity of certain Greeks – Xenophon in particular – to read the prospects of success or failure in battle from the condition of a sacrificed animal’s entrails. (He gives a slightly comical explanation of why such divination – which he says the Greeks took too far into the realm of superstition – might have worked. This is that animals are in greater sympathy with nature than men, and so will register at some level such qualities of the environment, e.g. the weather, that might give strength and courage to a fighter. Hegel seems to have overlooked that such qualities would have been beneficial to both sides! For the Greeks themselves these divinations were carried out to find out which gods would be on their side in battle, a notion far removed from Hegel’s psycho-meteorology. Which of the two was closer to the truth remains to be seen.)
- c) The sympathetic relationship with nature of plants and animals. (Obvious recently documented examples of such sympathy include the capacity of certain animals to detect earthquakes prior to their occurrence.)

The freer an individual becomes, for Hegel, the less he will be determined by living in sympathy with nature. As a result ‘it would be a complete mistake to make this participation of the soul in the life of the whole universe into the highest object of the science of mind’.¹² Now though we may agree with this, we must still ask the crucial question of *how* the world as a whole can have such an affect on individual natural souls. How, in short, can what lies beyond the individual (the outer or ‘universal natural soul’) nonetheless act on the individual (the inner)?

The difficulty clearly lies in Hegel’s failure to give us any clear sense of what the natural soul really is. The implication is that, though individualized, it nonetheless

reaches out to receive influences from the macrocosm which are sometimes registered in human consciousness. In accounting for such phenomena (Hegel considers many more later on in his discussion of the different forms of clairvoyance and animal magnetism) it is not enough for Hegel to say simply that man's 'sympathy with nature' is the first level of the body's ideality or the soul in its least determined immediacy. What would be needed is a conception of a level of man's being able to receive primitive communications from nature in the way that Hegel describes these. Of course Hegel thinks that such influences are actually minimal – he thus rejects astrology since he sees no more to planetary behaviour than their merely outer movements¹³ – but this is no excuse for not giving a satisfactory account of them.

It is instructive here to consider briefly the relation between the philosophy of nature and the anthropology. It was shown in the discussion of life that Hegel's account reaches its ontological limit here. (This can also be noticed at many different points in Hegel's exposition of Organics.) If an account that went beyond these limits had been forthcoming, then we might have expected the natural soul to be an anthropological individualization of the level of being intrinsic to life, just as a human vegetative soul is for Aristotle a localized and formatively active region of vital heat and *pneuma*. However, the fact that Hegel introduces many factors into his conception of the natural soul that take it far beyond a possible ontology of life – such as cultural differences and, more importantly, sentience – shows that his category is already far removed from any such ontology.

I leave for now the issue of this 'universal life of nature' and of man's sympathy with the natural world, and will return to it when considering clairvoyance and animal magnetism. However, it can briefly be stated what the main thesis will be. This is that Hegel is not quite sure in general what to make of psychical or paranormal phenomena and where to place them. On the one hand he is keen to use them as evidence for the rich life which the soul is capable of living, and for its spiritual qualities. On the other, he is reluctant to draw out some of the obvious philosophical questions that arise if one begins to take them seriously (such as how the body and the different levels of soul actually interact in making e.g. sensation possible), preferring instead to relegate them to the status of pre-rational and unfree.¹⁴ Hegel will, in short, go only so far with the mystic, preferring in the end to put him in a lowly, pre-philosophical place rather than to have the coherence of his system threatened. Here, in other words, Hegel the Romantic comes up against his more forthright and confident – though for the same reason vulnerable – Enlightenment self.¹⁵

From his consideration of the influence of the macrocosm on the microcosm via cycles of nature..., Hegel moves to a more particularized aspect of the natural soul: the differences between races and cultures. These represent the first level of man's overcoming the cyclical universality of nature. (We should remember, here, that Hegel had no conception of natural or cosmic evolution.) His descriptions of the main European 'local spirits' are a particularly enjoyable read, and find Hegel showing off a considerable sense of humour.¹⁶ The feminine form of individuality, for example, is according to him most developed in Italian maidens who have been known to 'die instantaneously from grief over an unhappy love affair'. The French he mocks lightly for their tendency to value *esprit* above all else, which manifests in thought as ideas 'thrown about like flashes of lightning' but without proper unity, whilst the English, 'the people of intellectual intuition', are complemented for their poets and capacity

for trade, though Hegel makes light work of their philosophers. The Germans, finally, are both complemented and chided as thinkers (complemented for their depth and inwardness, chided for their obscurity), and also ridiculed for their obsession with formalism and official titles.

By this point in his discussion, the philosophical force of Hegel's concepts has almost completely disappeared. The category of 'local spirit', for example, is simply descriptive and not considered by Hegel as having a significant metaphysical status.¹⁷ Matters do not get any better in the transition from cultural and national differences to individual ones, where Hegel considers the different temperaments, characters and such questions as the nature of talent and genius. Here it is of relevance for us to note that Hegel considers a man's individuality – the structure of his body, the culture and family into which he is born, his talents etc... – to be a purely contingent matter. The individual does not, in short, have any meaning or, what amounts to the same thing, have rationality as an individual, over and above his potential to be the vessel of the Idea's path to self-knowledge in the sphere of the universal. True individuality (i.e. the concrete universal) is not reached by man as a unique synthesis of soul and body (or a potentially unique resurrected synthesis of these), but only in so far as this synthesis is able to deliver him over to the life of thought.¹⁸ It will soon be shown that this loss of the individual in Hegel – a loss which contradicts a more rigorous adherence to dialectical principles – results from his failure to conceive the need for an expanded anthropological ontology.

Before moving to sentience, Hegel considers several other aspects of 'natural' human life, including the ages of man, the division of the sexes, sleep and dreaming. Within the movement of the dialectic, these are supposed to provide the antithesis to the first stage of the soul's individuality which was given by racial and national differences etc. However, given that Hegel's notion of the natural soul – the subject of the dialectical development – is itself so vague, it is difficult to see what kind of argument is being put forward. How, for example, is sexual division supposed to be an antithesis of being French or German? (Being French or German is itself obviously a function of far more than simply having a natural soul – which is common also to plants – in that it involves advanced culture and hence much higher levels of man's being. Sleeping and waking or the division of the sexes, on the other hand, are common to all animal life and so more universal than cultural differences.)¹⁹

The category of sentience is meant to complete the dialectic of the natural soul. Whereas the earlier stages of the natural soul, and particularly the universal natural soul, are supposed to have characterized its nature in itself and not yet for itself, 'with sensation the soul has reached the stage where the universal constituting its nature becomes explicitly for it in an immediate determinateness'.²⁰ It has already been said that we do not really know what this universal is, since Hegel's notion of the natural soul is both ontologically underdetermined and vague in its precise extension. The question of this universal's nature becomes even more difficult to conceive clearly when we consider some of the statements Hegel makes about sensibility: 'Everything', says Hegel, 'is in sensation: if you will, everything that emerges in conscious intelligence and in reason has its source and origin in sensation.'²¹ If we do not read this sentence as a mere rhetorical flourish, it raises difficult questions about

the general status of the *a priori* and of the spirit-nature relation. Aside from these, it also leads one to ask how everything can have its source in sensation, yet sensation itself have its source in earlier stages of the natural soul.

What is to be understood by the words 'source' and 'origin' is clearly the crucial question here, and Hegel is obviously unsure how exactly it should be answered, since if sensibility belongs to the natural soul – which itself in some form supervenes on the physical body – then it cannot be the source of everything in a strong sense. (If it were, this would be phenomenalism.) On the other hand, sensibility must also have the spiritual world of thought implicit in it, since thought, for Hegel, 'is in and for itself universal, necessary and objective', whereas a sensation 'is an isolated particular, contingent, a one-sided subjectivity'.²² (As was shown in the discussion of the *Logic*, the particular and subjective presupposes the universal and objective.) Hegel's claims thus result in the following contradictory positions:

- (i) Sensibility is the ground of every notion of the natural world we have, and so is a presupposition of any such notion.
- (ii) Sensibility presupposes earlier determinations of the natural soul, as well as a physical body.
- (iii) Sensibility, as the sphere of the contingent and the particular, must have its ground in the necessary and the universal.

(i) and (ii) are clearly incompatible, since every notion we have of both the natural soul and the physical body presupposes sensibility. Their incompatibility could only be transcended if the ontological gulf separating matter as inanimate and dumb (the mineral kingdom) and sensation as matter's existence for the soul (the animal kingdom) were bridged. (See chapter 7 for a brief sketch of how this might be achieved.) Given that Hegel is unable to do this, his system circularly presupposes and so never actually accounts for sensibility.²³ (A further example of a circular use of determinations of sensibility in part of an attempt to explain sensibility itself arises when Hegel considers the concepts of the inner and the outer. Here we find him saying that 'the content of sensation either originates in the outer world or belongs to the soul's interior'.²⁴ Yet this outer world which Hegel here seems happy to presuppose, is given as outer only by sensibility itself.²⁵)

One point where this presupposition comes perhaps closest to being recognized by Hegel, is when he introduces the idea of a psychical physiology. 'Sensibility in general', Hegel says, 'is the healthy fellowship of the individual mind in the life of its bodily part'.²⁶ In the face of this, the challenge of a psychical psychology would be to discover how an 'internal sensation comes to give itself specific bodily forms'. Hegel does not, however, discuss the considerable metaphysical implications such a science might have and seems content to rest with the expectation that it would provide us with detailed correlations (such as we find in modern neuroscience, for example) between sensory experiences and physiological events. As an example of what such a science would give us Hegel says 'we should have, for example, to explain the line of connection by which anger and courage are felt in the breast, the blood, the "irritable" system, just as thinking and mental occupation are felt in the head, the centre of the "sensible" system'.²⁷ What, in more detail, one might expect from such a 'line of connection' [*Zusammenhang*], and whether it might have ontological or causal signif-

icance – e.g. in helping us to understand how the bodily is infused with the qualities of soul and spirit – Hegel does not discuss.²⁸

In addition to considering sensibility at the general level, Hegel's account has a detailed and often fascinating description of each of the different outer senses, as well as of the many immediate outer forms taken by the inner experiences of the soul.²⁹ (Although Hegel explicitly says that his subject-matter in these considerations is only the immediate corporealization of inner sensations – this being the province of the current stage of the soul's development – he does throughout give examples which already invoke more advanced forms of soul and even spiritual life. The reasons for this will be considered below.) Discussing these, however, would take us beyond the requirements of the overall argument. I thus now turn to his consideration of the feeling soul and of clairvoyance and animal magnetism in particular.

6.2 The Feeling Soul

Hegel's conception of the soul describes an ascent through levels of increasing ideality. This ascent is simultaneously a progressive inwardization of those determinations which, as the natural soul, it encounters as immediate and given. In the feeling soul there hence emerges, for the first time according to Hegel, a unity of soul. Here the soul 'attains to the consciousness of its totality, but a consciousness which is not as yet objective but only subjective'.³⁰ This unity is best characterized by Hegel's most succinct statement of this stage of the soul's development: 'What I feel, I am, and what I am, I feel.'³¹ Now within the context of Hegel's overall argument, the feeling soul occupies the position of antithesis or opposition. This is because it lies halfway between the immediate determinations of sensibility (i.e. the natural soul), and the true unity and objectivity achieved when soul gives way to mind.³² As a result, the feeling soul is a battleground on which the soul finds itself caught between the outer universality of the natural soul (of the soul absorbed in an immediate sympathy with nature and as sentient), and the inner universality of the life of thought (of soul which has overcome the immediacy of sensibility and awakened to self-consciousness).

The feeling soul is thus divided against itself. On the one hand it is a soul beginning to realize its unity, and with this its possible freedom and independence. On the other, it has to contend with feelings and perceptions (such as anger), inner states (such as the different forms of trance) and the possibility of insanity, all of which threaten to swallow it in subjective immediacy and to take it away from an objective perspective on the world. Hegel's discussion of the feeling soul has three main categories:

- a) The feeling soul in its immediacy. Here Hegel considers what he calls magical relations into which the soul is capable of entering. These are classified into two main forms: formal or healthy and unhealthy or diseased. The healthy forms of magical relation are ordinary dreaming, the mother-foetus relation and the relation of the individual to his genius. The unhealthy forms Hegel chiefly associates with animal magnetism and other forms of clairvoyance.
- b) The self-feeling soul. This is the feeling soul in its particularity or its mediating phase. In its healthy form the self-feeling soul is simply the soul's awareness of

itself in its particular feelings. In its diseased form self-feeling manifests as the many kinds of insanity, which, Hegel argues, lie between the subjectivity of feeling-life and the objectivity of thought.

- c) Habit. In habit the soul has subdued the natural and feeling souls, so making possible the actualization of consciousness or the life of mind. Habit is a first important victory in spirit's battle against matter.

Before I consider the first of these, a brief reminder of this chapter's aims is in order. Its main goal is an understanding of how Hegel conceives the soul and the soul-body relation. In this section I thus focus a) on how Hegel himself conceives the implications of magical phenomena for the soul-body relation, and b) on implications which might be drawn from what he says of relevance to the overall aim of conceiving a dialectically motivated transcendental ontology. The basic conclusion will be that Hegel leaves a tension between the rational path to knowledge in the sphere of pure thought which he defends, and possible forms of knowing on which some light is thrown by the psychical phenomena he considers. When Steiner is reached it will be seen how these might be unified, and how such a unity might lead towards knowledge of the transcendental ground of sensibility and thus an overcoming of the metaphysical limitations of Kant and Hegel.

What, then, does Hegel understand by a magical relation of the feeling soul? Hegel defines the magical relation as 'a relation of inner to outer or to something else generally, which dispenses with mediation'.³³ In so far as the feeling soul is able as some kind of active agent to produce immediate effects on others or the world or to receive such effects immediately, it is involved in magical relations. As this definition shows, the magical relation is very broadly conceived by Hegel, and includes the mind's ability to act magically on the body or to have an immediate influence on other minds.³⁴ The notion of the magical relation in general is thus simply an attempt to qualify the way in which the feeling soul 'attains to a consciousness of its totality'. However, in introducing this concept, Hegel has quite specific phenomena in mind, and although he also mentions the dreaming state, the relation of the child to its mother in the womb, and my relation as an individual to my particular character and destiny as examples of the magical relation, these are not the location of his main interest.³⁵ This interest lies in those immediate or magical relations of the feeling soul which are captured by the concepts of intuitive knowing, clairvoyance and animal magnetism.

Hegel considers the following unfolding series of different forms of clairvoyance:

- (i) Immediate (or intuitive) knowledge of things already possessed in some form but forgotten. Hegel cites as an example a boy who had lost his memory owing to a brain injury, but then regained it under hypnosis (or magnetic somnambulism).
- (ii) Immediate knowledge of events located in regions of space and time different from those in which the physically embodied individual finds himself. Here Hegel gives examples of premonitions or second sight (seeing future events) and the ability to see events which are happening beyond the range of physical vision. The latter he takes as evidence that 'space pertains not to the soul but to outer nature';³⁶ thus that the soul is not spatially bound. Premonitions, likewise, Hegel takes as demonstrating that the soul does not require the mediation of time

- though the actual clairvoyant state contains such a mediation, making it possible for it to state predictions. What makes such predictions so unreliable and potentially deceptive is the difficulty in identifying a quantum of time to correspond to the qualitatively apprehended inner event.
- (iii) Immediate knowledge of one's own mental and physical states. Here Hegel refers to forms of consciousness in which the individual is given a special kind of insight into his own psychical constitution and into details of his physical states – which can help in curing illness, for example.
- (iv) Immediate knowledge of another's mental and physical states. Hegel discusses in this connection the 'magnetic rapport' between a hypnotist (or magnetizer) and the hypnotized patient, in which the former is in certain cases able to know the mental states of his patient.
- (v) Immediate knowledge of another's mental states (i.e. actual participation in them). Here the magnetic 'rapport attains its highest degree of intimacy and intensity'. Hegel gives an example of two women (treated by a French physician) who had a deep affection for one another and experienced the same illnesses.

Now Hegel is not primarily interested in proving that such clairvoyant knowledge exists, though he does discuss the quality of the evidence presented (of which he is in certain cases – such as prediction of the future – critical). He thinks the attempt to provide the sceptic with verification of the facts of clairvoyance is useless, since 'the *a priori* conceptions of these inquirers are so rooted that no testimony can avail against them, and they have even denied what they have seen with their own eyes'.³⁷ The problem with the sceptic, in other words, lies in the rigidity of his concepts, not in the presence or absence of empirical evidence for the phenomena in question. Given the undeniable existence of such phenomena, Hegel's interest is in how clairvoyance can help us to understand the nature of man and his feeling soul.³⁸

The one thing that each of the above-mentioned classes of phenomena have in common, says Hegel, is that they are related to the individual world of the feeling soul and so cannot reach the universality of objective thought and knowledge.³⁹ This is because they represent a rupturing of the human organization in which the wakefulness of thinking life, which is accompanied by ordinary, healthy self-feeling (e.g. my immediate relation to myself and my environment), is separated from the rest of this organization and replaced by a heightened awareness of the sphere of the feeling soul. This awareness is achieved, however, at the expense of loss of self-consciousness and freedom and so, for Hegel, constitutes a sinking of the soul into a lower, almost animal-like state.⁴⁰ In such a state it is quite natural that the soul should be capable of gaining immediate knowledge (e.g. transcending boundaries of space and time) of its environment, since the soul is the 'truly immaterial, the all-penetrating, the existing Concept'.⁴¹ The crucial point, then, is that Hegel considers rational, waking consciousness and clairvoyance to be incompatible: clairvoyance is possible only as a rupture of the healthy human organization, and is, consequently, a state of illness.⁴²

It is important for Hegel that the phenomena of clairvoyance and animal (or organic) magnetism can occur in two main forms: a) as symptoms of physical illness or spontaneously in people of a certain mental disposition (including especially girls at the onset of puberty, pregnant women and old people), and b) when deliberately

induced, either by the clairvoyant himself, or by someone else (e.g. the hypnotist). When deliberately induced these phenomena represent animal magnetism proper, which interests Hegel most because, he says, it reflects explicitly what is only implicit in spontaneous clairvoyance.

What, then, is animal magnetism? The concept of animal magnetism was invented by Mesmer, who gave it this name both because he originally used magnets to induce it, but also because his procedures established attractive relations between organic beings (specifically between humans, but also involving animals).⁴³ The magnetic state and process itself is described by Hegel as follows:

- (i) It involves inducing a trance-like or hypnotic state in someone. Hegel says that this state is, in most cases, one of sleep. The crucial point is that ‘the feeling soul must become independent... of the mediated, intellectual consciousness’.
- (ii) This state can be induced either through ‘stroking’ (which involves making movements over the surface of someone’s body, from the head to the pit of the stomach, with one’s hands) or through the mere laying on of hands. In other cases it can be induced much more easily – through an effort of will alone or even a glance from the magnetizer if the rapport with his patient is particularly strong. The main point, says Hegel, ‘is that one individual acts on another whose will is weaker and less independent’.⁴⁴
- (iii) Physiologically what happens is that the functions of outwardly directed organs (especially the sense organs and the brain) are turned inwards and so taken over by the ‘brain of the reproductive system’, the ganglia (what would today be called the autonomic nervous system). Consciousness in the magnetic state is as a result active primarily in the pit of the stomach, not in the head, and represents the exercise of what Hegel calls a ‘generalized sense’.⁴⁵
- (iv) At the soul level the magnetic state involves the soul’s sinking into its inwardness. Sometimes this can result in clairvoyance, which the magnetizer can utilize by putting questions to his subject.⁴⁶ (The sense of hearing is the main sense through which communication with the patient takes place.)
- (v) Animal magnetism can result in the cure of illnesses by restoring the ‘internal fluidity’ of the organism. It does this in much the way that sleep does – by, says Hegel, returning the organism to its ‘simple universality’ in the face of whatever disruption it has suffered.

Hegel’s account has many more details, but these are his main points. What is of greatest interest for this book are the broader philosophical implications of what he says. How do the phenomena of animal magnetism help us to understand the nature of the mind or soul and of its relation to both the body and the spiritual world of thought? These phenomena will first be considered from an ontological perspective, after which follows a brief discussion of related epistemological questions.

The first thing to observe is that several of the claims Hegel makes about the soul in his discussion have implications which he never fully actualizes. He says, firstly, that the soul is immaterial and all-penetrating. If it were truly immaterial, however, then it should survive the death of the body, since the body is a material entity. (In this consists its capacity for death.) Secondly, he says that the soul does not exist in either space or time – at least as these are ordinarily understood – since an individual is

capable of foreknowledge (albeit in limited sense), and also of affecting or being affected by another individual a long way distant from him. Yet given that there is a physiological aspect of animal magnetism which is very clearly located in both space and time (i.e. in the nervous system), this should raise the crucial question: how can a soul which is not subject to spatio-temporal restrictions interact with a body which is? There might well be a very good answer to this question (one will briefly be considered in the following chapter), but Hegel makes no attempt even to ask it properly.

A third question arising from Hegel's argument concerns the status of the 'generalized sense', located in the pit of the stomach, which he mentions. How are we to understand this? If Hegel answers by referring to the nervous system as understood by biology, then we must surely reply that it is the soul (whether the natural or the feeling soul), and not a nervous system, which senses – as Hegel himself argues.⁴⁷ This objection of course takes us back to the basic shortcoming of Hegel's system, namely its ontological limits, arising from the failure to conceive ontologies of life and sentience. Leaving this by now familiar criticism aside, we can nonetheless see that Hegel's consideration of animal magnetism and clairvoyance at least opens up avenues for further thought about other levels of being.⁴⁸ As Hegel himself emphasizes, what these considerations do show is that the categories of the understanding are incapable of yielding deep insight into the nature of the soul, as well as that human subjectivity and soul-life are not in any way confined to the body. (The mind is not, in other words, an idea of the body as Spinoza argues. Rather, the body is if anything an idea of the mind, given that the latter both falls within sentience and is, in so far as soul interpenetrates it, capable of interacting immediately, or magically, with other bodies.⁴⁹)

So much, then, for ontology. What about epistemology? Hegel of course criticizes any attempt to know the soul which is restricted to the mode of thought of the understanding. In his discussion of clairvoyance and animal magnetism, however, he also rejects the possibility that immediate or intuitive forms of knowing could yield knowledge in the higher sense. The main reason given for this is that clairvoyance and the magnetic state are symptoms of disease or illness which result from a sundering of man's rational and free nature from the lower part of his soul – a division which Hegel considers further in his discussion of madness. That the magnetic or somnambulistic state (however conceived) is not a suitable means of searching for higher knowledge will be admitted, but Hegel gives no reason why clairvoyant techniques could not in principle be practised by someone in full control of his rational faculties. There is, in short, no *a priori* ground for thinking that the life of pure thought cannot exist alongside one of an empiricism enriched by clairvoyance.⁵⁰

In addition to this, the question of levels of being intrinsic to life and sentience still needs to be asked, and whilst we might agree with Hegel that the understanding is inadequate to this task, it is also apparent that speculative reason is not up to it either. This leaves us with an alternative. We can either claim, with Kant, that psychical or mystical phenomena represent a 'dark life' of the soul which must forever stand between detailed, mathematically supported knowledge of nature and a true understanding of the mind-body and mind-world relations, or we must hope that a clarity of consciousness could be brought to bear on them which is able to yield something we are able to call knowledge – given by neither the understanding nor reason, though in

which both could have their say – of the regions of being (of a transcendental ontology) whose existence our ordinary mental or soul-lives presupposes, i.e. of the soul or mind-body and mind-world relations.

One further epistemological issue raised by these considerations concerns the nature of the imagination, the unifier of concepts and percepts, which plays such an important role in Kant's metaphysics. In the discussion of Kant the centrality of his schematism of the categories was emphasized. It is in this schematism in particular that he attempts to show how the categories of the understanding can be constitutive of our spatio-temporal experience. Here Kant was also seen to admit, however, that the schematism 'is a hidden art in the depths of the human soul, whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes only with difficulty'.⁵¹ How the intelligible and sensible conditions of experience are brought together remains, in other words, a mystery. From the above discussion, both of Hegel's *Logic* and his anthropology, it is now clear that a fully satisfactory schematism would have to be a transcendental ontology which showed how the self as absolute subject is related to the body whose physical organs are, as it were, the last link in a chain of processes – passing through levels of being intrinsic to life and sentience – which result in the experience of a world of perceptible objects.⁵²

So much for the feeling soul in its immediacy. I now turn to brief considerations of the self-feeling soul, habit and then the actual soul after which the examination of Hegel is concluded. In the first of these discussions, the self-feeling soul, occasion will be found to introduce questions of Christology which will anticipate the discussion of the last chapter.

The self-feeling soul occupies the central point of Hegel's anthropology. It is the mediating category of a mediating category, or the antithesis within an antithesis. It is, in other words, the soul at its most particular, turned upon itself and cut off from the universality of both the natural and the actual souls. (In the first of these it is submerged in unity with the processes of nature. In the second it discovers its 'objective, free consciousness' as spirit.) In the healthy human being, the feeling-life of the soul has been subordinated by the 'dominant genius', which 'subsumes each special content of sensation, idea, desire, inclination, etc., as it arises' and puts it in its 'proper place'.⁵³ As in his discussion of the soul in its immediacy, however, it is the unhealthy state which is of greatest interest to Hegel, and this – in the sphere of the self-feeling soul – is insanity or madness. The difference between a healthy life of self-feeling and the diseased form is, says Hegel, 'like that between waking and dreaming: only that in insanity the dream falls within the waking limits, and so makes part of the actual self-feeling'. Healthy self-feeling presupposes self-consciousness, as Hegel himself acknowledges, and as such is the resolution of the tension which madness expresses.⁵⁴

As regards the formal character of madness, which interests us most since it reveals an important aspect of Hegel's understanding of the soul, it differs in one crucial respect from the phenomena considered under immediate feeling. Whereas these demonstrated, for Hegel, a division or separation of the feeling soul from objective consciousness, madness is the opposition of them. In the magnetic state, the soul is a unity of subject and object in itself but not for itself – i.e. it is submerged in an immediate unity with the universal natural soul. In the life of thought, the unity of subject and object is achieved both in itself and, according to Hegel at least, for itself, since here the sphere of the natural soul (including sensibility) is decisively left behind.

The mad person – say someone who thinks that he is Napoleon – is caught somewhere between the two. Unlike the somnambulist he retains self-consciousness, but this is compromised by an excessively subjective or immediate absorption in the sphere of feelings, sensations and thoughts. He fails, says Hegel, ‘to discharge the Other from its immediate identity with the feeling soul’, and so ‘clings to a merely subjective identity of the subjective and the objective’.⁵⁵ This makes it possible for him to identify himself with subjective fancies in a state Hegel calls ‘waking dreaming’, which often assume the form of ‘fixed ideas’, rather than with that objective reality in which he exists as one embodied individual human amongst many. Another way in which Hegel puts this is by saying that the insane person ‘is in communion with himself in the negative of himself’, rather than as an ‘inwardly undivided subject’.

It has already been argued above, against Hegel, that embodied human subjectivity is – in the absence of the idea of resurrection – still in a state of an unresolved subject-object tension. In the face of this it is not entirely clear what it means to be in communion with oneself as an ‘inwardly undivided subject’, since, for Hegel, this subject can only attain to an objective conception of itself as an ‘infinitely determined individuality’. On its own, then, this ‘inwardly undivided subject’ is completely indeterminate and does not in anyway help me to ground my subjectivity in the world of the sense. To know myself I need to know the relation of my ‘undivided subject’ or the I to my ‘infinitely determined individuality’, and Hegel’s system does not give me this knowledge. Despite this crucial imprecision, it is clear what Hegel is trying to say. I overcome madness when I know my individual place in life and do not confuse ideals with their realization.

Hegel considers three main classes of madness or insanity, beginning with those forms in which the subject is most absorbed in the sphere of the natural soul, and so is furthest from the exercise of his rational faculties and thus from an awareness of the contradiction in which he lives (he calls these idiocy, the distracted mind, and the rambling mind),⁵⁶ and ending with mania or frenzy, in which the contradiction between a subjective idea or fancy and the objective world is acutely felt by the madman himself.⁵⁷ Madness proper – in which the ‘fixed ideas’ mentioned above take root within consciousness – lies between these two extremes. Hegel completes his discussion by considering how madness is cured. Here he emphasizes that the most successful cures of madness are psychological and consist, above all, in finding a means of freeing the madman from his fixed idea. Hegel cites the example of an Englishman who believed he had a hay-cart with four horses in his stomach. His doctor cured him of his illusion by giving him an emetic which made him run to the window to throw up at just the time when a cart with four horses, arranged by the doctor, was driving past, so inducing the belief in the madman that he had thrown it up himself.

Madness, then, is a state of contradiction in the subject-object relation, in which the subject identifies with a non-actual condition (such as being Napoleon) because he is unable to give his ideas proper objective form. But has not the argument all along been that this is precisely the shortcoming of Hegel’s system? If so, then Hegel must himself have been mad!⁵⁸ Not only Hegel, however, but also the rest of us must confess our insanity and irrationality, for if the rational is an actual, fully-mediated unity of subject and object, and if this unity is achieved not in thinking alone, but

when the self and the material world are reconciled through an ultimate act of love, then only Christ – the man-god who not only dared to say he was one with the creator God, but (if we accept the testimonies of history) also proved this unity by resurrecting a body – is properly rational. Madness here gets turned on its head and health and reality are redefined from a Christological perspective. (Metaphysics, in short, becomes Christology.) I am healthy and rational only if I love, and so fully know myself to be, the other – and this includes the material world. But more on this matter later.

Hegel, then, was a madman because, like the man who thinks he is Napoleon, he persuaded himself that the life of thought alone is able to overcome fully the subject-object opposition – and this in the face of the repeated opportunities that have been pointed out to overcome this illusion.⁵⁹ Hegel's consideration of clairvoyance and animal magnetism has taken us closest to seeing where – from within his own thought – we might begin to correct his mistakes, not only from a philosophical, but also from an empirical perspective. Might there really be such things as a 'magnetic fluid' or a distinct feeling soul – which separates or withdraws from the body every night during sleep – potentially capable of surviving death? And what role would such levels of being play in making ordinary thought and perception possible? Ironically, it is through the discoveries of clairvoyants and mystics such as Steiner, the paradigmatic madmen of history, that a way of overcoming the insanity by which self-knowledge is withheld from us might be found.⁶⁰ It might, in short, take such a madman to help restore us to sanity.⁶¹

The last category of Hegel's discussion of the feeling soul is a more modest one, habit. In the category of habit the soul has arrived at a state of comparative peace and rest following the strife of somnambulism, clairvoyance and madness. (It is also a lull before the storm of phenomenology, which begins when the lightning strike of the I cuts into the soul, transforming it into consciousness.) In habit, the soul has made the life of sensation and of its embodiment in general into its second nature; 'nature, because it is an immediate being of the soul; a second nature, because it is an immediacy created by the soul'.⁶² Whereas in the immediate and self-feeling souls the individual is related to a 'contingent, single sensation, idea, appetite...', in habit it is related to itself. This self is not, however, the immediately self-relating universal of spirit (i.e. the I), but a more limited universality which consists in no more than that, through repetition, the soul has freed itself from the immediacy of feeling and sensation.⁶³

'In habit, our consciousness', Hegel says, 'is at the same time present in the subject-matter, interested in it, yet conversely absent from it, indifferent to it'. Likewise in habit our self 'just as much appropriates the subject-matter as, on the contrary, it draws away from it', and our soul 'completely pervades its bodily activities and, on the other hand, deserts them'.⁶⁴ Habit is, in other words, a kind of intermediate, sleepy awareness which the soul has of its environment; the spoil of having battled to mould the human body – for Hegel the middle term between spirit and nature – into its instrument, of having realized the ideality implicit in the natural world.⁶⁵ From here it can now look forward beyond nature and realize such fruits of consciousness as the life of morality, religion, art and – for Hegel above all – the intellectual life.

6.3 The Actual Soul

The category of the actual soul is really the swan-song of Hegel's psychological anthropology, in which he both marvels at the beauty and sophistication of the human body and shows off the soul's achievement in having made it into its servant. The soul as subject becomes actual, for Hegel, when its 'corporeity is an externality which stands as a predicate, in being related to which, [the soul] is related to itself'.⁶⁶ The actual soul is thus a 'mediated unity of the inner being of the [soul] and the outer being of the [body]'. This unity, however, constitutes a new immediacy – the immediacy of that magical relation in which the soul exercises its dominion over the body. In its highest form this unity manifests as the characteristically human gestures and expressions with which the soul breathes life into the body – Hegel emphasizes the face, in which man's spiritual qualities are given outer expression, his erect posture, his hand or 'the absolute tool', the quality of his gait and, above all, his capacity to give outer form to his inner life through speech.⁶⁷

Through its mastery over the body the actual soul has created an inwardness which, initially an 'empty space', is filled by the ego. This ego transforms the soul into consciousness. It is the 'self-related universal' which 'exists nowhere save in the I', in whose actualization 'the essence of the soul becomes', for the first time, 'for the soul'.⁶⁸ This, then, is the conclusion reached by Hegel's anthropology, and it signals the beginning of the *Encyclopaedia* version of the *Phenomenology*. In phenomenology, it is no longer the soul which encounters an outer matter (the determinations of sensibility...) to be overcome, but rather the knowledge-seeking self.

I turn, now, to a brief discussion of some points of tension in Hegel's argument and to a consideration of the anthropology's position in Hegel's system as a whole. A final appraisal of Hegel concludes the discussion.

The overall aim of Hegel's anthropology is to show how the soul emerges step by step out of the somnolent cycles of nature and into the inner light of self-consciousness. To this extent the anthropology lies at the very centre of the project of bringing to consciousness the connectedness and ultimate unity of spirit and matter.⁶⁹ Given the shortcomings in Hegel's conception of this unity, we should expect the overall tensions of his position (concerning ontology especially) to be felt particularly strongly in the anthropology. This has already been shown to be the case for Hegel's discussion of sensibility, in which his position's circularity was emphasized. I turn now to a basic difficulty in Hegel's discussion of the role of the self in his argument.

The difficulty is this: On the one hand Hegel argues that the I or subject of thought can appear only at the conclusion of the anthropology, where it transforms the soul into consciousness. Yet on the other it is clear – and Hegel on occasion even concedes this – that many of the main topics of the anthropology are inconceivable without presupposing self-consciousness. These include the differences between cultures, various psychical phenomena (including the magnetic state) and the different forms of madness. This is of course not surprising, given that Hegel is presenting an anthropology, since what is distinctive about man in comparison with other beings in the natural world is that he is self-conscious. However, it raises two important questions:

- (i) To what extent do Hegel's conceptions of the natural and feeling souls depend upon examples which already presuppose the actualization of self-consciousness, and what consequences does this have for their status within his thought?
- (ii) What are the consequences for the position of the anthropology within Hegel's system as a whole of the role played by the self in his argument?

Why, then, does Hegel consider cultural differences under the category of the natural soul, and clairvoyance and madness under the category of the feeling soul, given that all three of these classes of phenomena presuppose self-consciousness? To avoid circularity, the only answer Hegel can give to these questions is that it is in virtue of differences in the constitution of their natural souls that the individuals of a culture embody its specific characteristics, and likewise that it is in virtue of properties of the feeling soul that clairvoyance and madness are possible. The French thus embody the qualities of their culture, and specific individuals are susceptible to clairvoyance and madness, because their natural and feeling souls respectively are individually constituted in quite specific ways. It is crucial to recognize, in other words, that for Hegel's argument to be rational, the individuating factor in the case of the anthropological phenomena he examines can have nothing to do with what, for him, is to be intrinsically human.

To be human means to have self-consciousness and to be able to seek knowledge, and this knowledge itself must have a universality that overreaches both cultural and individual constitutional differences. The fact, in other words, that Hegel completed his system as a German – and thus as someone embodying qualities of the German natural soul – cannot be any kind of argument against its universality. Being German has something to do with the natural soul, not with the self. This is also the case for the clairvoyant and the madman, who, for Hegel, suffer from their respective illnesses not because they cannot think properly, but because of the effects upon their consciousness or their thinking of some kind of disharmony in their feeling souls. (Of course Hegel also recognizes that other – specifically physiological – factors are also involved in clairvoyance and madness. However, the phenomena themselves manifest not at the physiological, but at the soul-level.⁷⁰)

This, then, is the idealized resolution of the ambiguity surrounding the position of the self in Hegel's anthropology. Having self-consciousness is only extrinsically a presupposition of being French or being mad. Intrinsically, both of these conditions and all like them are the consequence of factors connected with different levels of soul (as well as the body). Now what makes this solution to the ambiguity stated an idealized one, is that Hegel's conception neither of the natural nor of the feeling soul is satisfactorily ontological. It is because of this that his discussion of them relies so heavily on specific anthropological phenomena, and that its value ends up being largely descriptive rather than philosophical (or explanatory) in the fuller sense. (This reliance also raises the question of the precise relation of the anthropology to the phenomenology, since it is possible to imagine certain of the topics considered under anthropology – such as some of the forms of immediate knowing and madness – being treated as forms of consciousness in the phenomenological sense.)

What, then, are the basic failings of Hegel's conception of the soul? At the beginning of this chapter it was shown that Hegel intended to present a dialectical and monistic conception of the soul and of the soul-body relation, which responds to the

dualistic or sceptical positions of the early-modern philosophers and Kant. The speculative method was supposed to provide the form of his argument, and the categories of the natural, feeling and actual souls with all of their intermediaries, the content. It has been shown, however, that Hegel does not adequately define how soul and body are really related, despite insisting at certain points – especially when considering clairvoyance – that they are in important senses distinct. How, then, could he have believed himself to have provided a satisfactory account of their interaction? The simple answer to this question is, I believe, that Hegel like no other philosopher held fast to the conviction that thinking and being are one.⁷¹ For if this conviction is true, the challenge for the philosopher is a) to understand what thinking is and what the implications of this are for how reality is structured, and b) to apply this understanding to every possible sphere of knowing, which Hegel of course does. (Only if he had relaxed somewhat his conviction of the unity of thinking and being would Hegel have recognized a greater need to conceive spirit in its full immanence.)

Hegel's response to a) has already been considered. Thinking in its highest, syllogistic form is the activity of a subject or concept which, in the act of thought, identifies itself and its other via a mediating concept which is identified with both. Central to the more detailed exposition of this conception of thinking are a whole series of basic Hegelian concepts: subject-object, immediate-mediated, universality-particularity-individuality, inner-outer...etc. These concepts or categories, which themselves receive proper philosophical treatment in the *Logic*, can be described as the basic tools of the Hegelian method, and it is their application to the anthropological phenomena considered by Hegel which makes up the argumentative core of his discussion. The concepts of the natural, feeling and actual souls in the anthropology, in other words, are very much secondary, as explanatory categories, to Hegel's use of his signature favourites. This has two main consequences:

- (i) The concepts used to describe the nature of the soul do not successfully reach their phenomena. (An example of this would be Hegel's claim at the very beginning of the anthropology that 'the soul is nature's universal immaterialism'.⁷² Hegel gives satisfactory accounts of neither the soul's universality nor its immateriality, despite considering phenomena – such as the ability to share someone else's thoughts and feelings immediately – which require such concepts.)
- (ii) The anthropology in general is over-determined empirically and under-determined not only ontologically, but also logically (in Hegel's sense). (An example of the logical under-determination of Hegel's discussion is his failure to consider how the soul's existence beyond ordinary space and time – demonstrated by the magnetic condition – can be related to its spatially and temporally localized embodiment.)

Hegel's concept of the soul is hence supposed to link nature and spirit, but under the general thesis that thinking and being are one. This, it has been argued, creates an unresolvable tension, which can now be expressed in very simple terms. It is a tension between two basic propositions which Hegel thought to be both true and compatible:

- (i) Thinking and being are ultimately one. (This is the basic proposition of objective or absolute idealism.)

- (ii) Subject and object (or spirit and matter) are ultimately one. (This is the basic proposition of dialectical monism in its Idealist form.)

The first of these propositions is demonstrated to be false by the need to consider an expanded ontology to account for life and sentience.⁷³ In Hegel's anthropology this demonstration is provided by exposing the shortcomings of his conceptions of the universal natural soul and of sensibility in particular. The truth of the second proposition can be demonstrated logically as the need for a unification of the subjective and the objective subject-object unities or I and not-I, which in Hegel's thought remains unrealized.

It was argued in chapter 5 that Hegel's system is, in opposition to his intentions, ultimately dualistic. In the anthropology this dualism manifests most obviously in the ambiguities in Hegel's conception of the spirit-nature relation. Perhaps the best example of these surrounds his conception of the self's origin. Here we see Hegel making two incompatible statements within a few pages of each other at the end of the anthropology: a) 'Philosophy has to recognize that mind is only *for itself* by opposing to itself material being, partly in the shape of its own corporeity and partly as an external world.'⁷⁴ b) 'The I exists only when it has itself for its object.'⁷⁵ Mind only becomes for itself through self-consciousness. Yet if, as self-consciousness, it can only exist when it has itself for its object, then it cannot become for itself by being opposed to 'material being' and 'corporeity'. (Here we of course see Hegel's developmental account of mind coming into conflict with the basic logic of the self in that he denies the latter's transcendence in favour of its immanent genesis, so slipping back into a form of Kantianism.⁷⁶ This contrasts with the solution of Aristotle, who preserves the spiritual character of the self by saying that it enters the human organization from without.⁷⁷)

It was of course Hegel who introduced the idea that every incomplete system of ideas must have mutually contradictory propositions in it, and so be dualistic. All that I have done in this discussion is remain faithful to this basic principle. Hegel has thus been brought before the tribunal of his own systematic demands, and found guilty of the charges of both unresolved contradiction and idealism in at least one aspect of its pejorative use: that attaching to the claim that the absolute is thought. Before sentence is passed, however, let us complete the discussion of the aspects of Hegel's system focused on with a brief statement of where some of its parts fail to fit together. (These reflections complement those of chapter 5.)

The inadequacies of Hegel's conception of the nature-spirit relation are most obvious when one tries to understand how the spheres of logic and nature are related in his system. Hegel was shown above to claim that although for us nature is prior to spirit, absolutely spirit comes first.⁷⁸ Yet in the absence of an explicit demonstration of how spirit comes to be nature, such a claim is little more than an abstraction, at best grounded in the demands of logic. In his anthropology – where the nature-spirit relation acquires a measure of concreteness – Hegel argues the other way around that spirit emerges from nature. From the standpoint of the system, then, there is a gulf – symptomatic of Hegel's dualism – separating logic, the crowning achievement of absolute spirit, from nature. Each sits like a lonely outpost at an extreme end of the system for the simple reason that Hegel's anthropology and phenomenology are too weak ontologically to act as a proper middle term between them. (Another way of

putting this is to say that the priority of logic over nature reflects the holistic and idealistic thrust of Hegel's system, whereas the priority of nature reflects its drive for immanence in the face of the apparent emergence of spirit from nature.⁷⁹ The failure to reconcile these drives reflects the absence of an ontology which is able to show how matter is truly the self-outpouring of spirit.⁸⁰)

The absence of a satisfactory conception of the logic-nature relation has the further consequence that the question of where and how consciousness actually begins cannot be answered. It appears to follow from the arguments of the anthropology that the transition from man's being a living organism to the next level of complexity, his having a natural soul, is also a transition from insentience to the first, minimal level of awareness – initially of mere immediate determinations of sense or a dim receptivity to certain kinds of natural influence. Yet not only would it be impossible to account for this transition – if it actually existed – philosophically (i.e. any such account would always presuppose consciousness), any notion of such a transition would also open up a further dualism between the conscious (i.e. the soul) and the non-conscious (mere matter), so leaving us with a potentially vast sphere of being lying beyond the reach of any kind of human awareness. It is clear that such a dualism would compromise severely the aspirations of a philosophy which attempts to demonstrate the ultimate unity of subject and object.

This question of the boundaries of human consciousness can be nicely related to the discussion of the various forms of immediate knowing considered by Hegel – including the different species of clairvoyance – since it is through these that human awareness encounters the natural world most immediately. Otherwise put, it is here that man's awareness runs up against those boundaries beyond which must lie the blind forces of nature itself – i.e. nature, whether conceived mechanically, chemically or as living, which is not itself conscious. Now Hegel of course claims that the contents of this kind of immediate knowing could never be raised to the level of the knowledge of nature which the natural scientist has (i.e. knowledge mediated by self-consciousness and the categories of reflective thought). This, however, begs the question of what is implied for the limits of consciousness as well as for the nature of reality by such forms of knowing. (It also fails, as mentioned, to accommodate the possibility that the contents of clairvoyant knowledge could be incorporated into higher forms of self-consciousness, and thus are not necessarily constrained to the limited forms Hegel considers.)

What Hegel's system thus seems to leave us with, is a three-tiered conception of the nature-absolute spirit relation:

- (i) Pre-conscious nature – including the mechanical, chemical and living objects. This has consciousness only in and for the knower, but in no way in and for itself. (In so far as this sphere becomes an object of absolute knowing, it does so in the form of the relevant categories of the *Logic* and the philosophy of nature.)
- (ii) The sphere of the soul prior to the actualization of self-consciousness. This encompasses the natural and the feeling souls before their individualization through activities (social and otherwise) which presuppose the ego. Both of these souls give man a minimal form of immediate awareness or knowledge of his environment. (This sphere in its highest form Hegel calls philosophical anthropology.)

- (iii) Self-consciousness and thought, which begin with the consciousness of sense-certainty (i.e. the relation of the ego to the immediate determinations of sensibility) and reach their highest form in absolute knowing or the completed philosophical system.

When put like this, the basic contradiction of Hegel's conception becomes easy to see. This is that every conception we have of (i), pre-conscious nature, presupposes both (ii) (through which the determinations of sensibility are given) and (iii), human self-consciousness. The result of this is that in our knowing we never, as Kant argued, actually reach (i), and so have no ground for saying that it is non-conscious. The basic problem with Hegel's account is that he cannot describe the transition from (i) to (ii), since this raises the question of how the non-conscious can become or act upon the conscious.⁸¹ What this means, however, is that the only possible hope we could have of gaining knowledge of the apparently non-conscious natural world, would be to assimilate it to consciousness without presupposing sensibility – i.e. to overcome the opposition of the intelligible and the sensible. Such an assimilation or unification would be the demonstration that the whole material world is itself conscious (or $I = I$) and so capable of being united with human subjectivity.⁸²

It was demonstrated above that Hegel conceives the relation of the soul to the body in the actual soul as that of a subject fully unified with its predicate. If we now consider the self as the absolute subject of a human world, then it has to be said that man's corporeal nature is its predicate or self-externalization. Now Hegel claimed that the relation of the soul to the body in the actual soul is a magical relation, since the soul is able to act on and through the body immediately (i.e. they form an immediate unity). If, however, subject and predicate in man are to be unified in a fully-mediated sense, this would presuppose the achievement of such a magical relation to matter as a whole – and with it a genuine freedom as opposed to the more limited freedom of self-expression (i.e. the actual soul) through which our souls are able to animate our bodies. With this man would attain that immediate creative power in his relation to the natural (or natural-spiritual) world which must have brought this world itself into existence.⁸³

What Hegel's anthropology has shown us, then, is that if a fully mediated unity of subject and object is to be achieved, then consciousness needs to reach further down into the material sphere – into those regions described by Hegel in his discussion of the natural and feeling souls – to complement the heights achieved by higher reflection. If consciousness could achieve this – and the discoveries of Steiner and others show that it can – then it would have effected the progressive expansion of anthropology into the domain of nature, i.e. it would have made the discovery that, owing to its immediate cognitive accessibility, nature is in a deep sense human and that man is indeed a microcosm, not simply the hapless victim of irremovable illusion and error. Such an extension of the Hegelian project would represent a movement towards a properly transcendental ontology. It would also help to restore the imbalance between dialectic and transcendentalism which exists in Hegel's metaphysics. (This will be considered further in the next chapter.)

The unreconciled tension between the conscious and the unconscious is only one of a set of oppositions, which has been expanding as this discussion has progressed, considered pre-dialectically in Hegel's thought. Others which are unsatisfactorily

conceived and which have, in more or less detail, been discussed include: a) subject – object, b) material – immaterial, c) absolute – conditioned, d) infinite – finite, e) life – death, f) eternal – temporal, g) freedom – necessity. It is of course inevitable that if a rottenness exists in the very foundations and basic framework of a building, then this building will eventually collapse. I have argued that in Hegel's case the rottenness is to be found at the most basic level in his conception of sensibility and of the relation of sensibility to the conceptual. It is this which underlies the overall ontological under-determination of his system and which results in Hegel's ultimate mistreatment – in contradiction of his own principles – of many of philosophy's basic categories.

This completes the journey through Hegel's metaphysics. The conclusion attained is that the vessel of knowledge which he gives us, though magnificent in so many ways, is not in the end equipped to ride the high seas of the epistemic quest. In the search for a securer vessel I turn now to a brief consideration of Steiner. The ship of his metaphysical revelations – since revelations, despite their intrinsic rationality, they must be to most – is a craft of altogether different proportions. In view of this the aim of the next chapter is merely to launch it philosophically and, while it still sits in harbour, to appreciate certain aspects of its basic form. The journey that would have to be accomplished to test it more fully is – as will I hope become clear – far beyond the scope of a work of philosophy.

Notes

- 1 *Encyl.* §412, Zusatz.
- 2 For a lengthier exposition and discussion of Hegel's conception of the soul in the anthropology, see M. Greene's *Hegel on the Soul – A Speculative Anthropology* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972).
- 3 Hegel in this connection approvingly cites the Persian doctrine that light in its essence forms a spiritual-natural unity. See *Enc. Anthropology* §389, Zusatz.
- 4 *Enc. Anthropology* §389. By this Hegel means that the soul cannot have an individual immateriality as a particular soul which is one distinct substance amongst many. Hegel makes this claim when considering the 'community of soul and body', where he discusses the basic attempts made to understand it. What is interesting for us about his discussion is that although he points out the problem, he never actually addresses it directly, but instead conceals it behind the more general criticism of his predecessors (Kant, revealingly, is not mentioned) that their thought 'does not rise or develop into system, into the absolute syllogism'. My argument will be that Hegel's conception of the soul-body relation does not reach this level either and that only an expanded anthropological ontology would do so.
- 5 Sensation is a crucial function of the natural soul, and it is presupposed by every notion of a body that we possess. The body is, in short, itself given to us via an aspect of the soul.
- 6 *Ibid.* §389, Zusatz.
- 7 *Ibid.* §389, Zusatz.
- 8 He thus says '...the separation of the material and the immaterial can be explained only on the basis of the original unity of both.' *Ibid.* §389, Zusatz.
- 9 *Ibid.* §389, Zusatz.
- 10 In the *Logic*, too, Hegel speaks of an 'omnipresent soul' when considering the nature of life. See chapter 5.
- 11 *Ibid.* §392.

- 12 Ibid. §392, Zusatz.
- 13 His conception of planets thus follows the above-considered logic of the mechanical object. This further implies that Hegel thought planets to be real as mechanical objects only, and thus that they are somehow enduring examples of mechanism, and not themselves subject to the more complete logics of life and cognition. (This reading favours the idea that Hegel conceived there to be a split between logic and ontology, despite his claims in the last section of the *Logic* to the contrary.)
- 14 Kant is in many ways far clearer in his attitude to paranormal psychical phenomena than Hegel. He at least implicitly recognizes at CPR A222–3 that if e.g. such a substance which mediates between matter and thinking beings (which he, like Hegel – see §389, claims that some have postulated) could become an object of regular empirical experience, then its implications for philosophy would be highly significant.
- 15 In this he differs from Schelling whose leanings towards mysticism and theosophy – as well as towards a more enchanted conception of nature – are far stronger.
- 16 See the Zusatz to §394.
- 17 Steiner's conception of different cultures, by contrast, supplements descriptions of the kind we find here in Hegel with an elaborate esoteric ontology, leading him to make claims about the differences between e.g. the characteristic astral body constitutions of different peoples, and differences in their characteristic post-mortem experiences etc., as well as the connection between national characters and specific angels. Such ideas of Steiner will not be discussed in any detail below, but will be presented merely to illustrate how he bridges the nature-culture divide through his expanded ontology and angelology.
- 18 Hegel considers human individuality further in his discussion of man's *genius* or *daimon*, which includes his destiny, under 'feeling soul'. This is ultimately determined by contingent factors for Hegel (in contrast to Steiner who claims to have discovered a necessity in it), and so stands in opposition to man's thinking self.
- 19 This empirical over-determination of Hegel's basic categories is a recurrent feature of the anthropology. What it shows is Hegel's failure to relate nature and culture properly.
- 20 Ibid. §399, Zusatz.
- 21 Ibid. §400.
- 22 Ibid. §400, Zusatz. By distinguishing the concept and the percept in this way, Hegel's thought falls back into the contradictions of the understanding.
- 23 Hegel's claim that 'everything is sensation' should, like his claim in the *Logic* that 'sensibility is the sphere of absolute difference', be diagnosed as something like an exclamation of despair arising from deep within Hegel's psyche in a semi-conscious acknowledgement of the central contradiction of his system. It is almost as though the concepts themselves were trying to tell Hegel that he is abusing them!
- 24 Ibid. §401, Zusatz.
- 25 What this implicitly means is that the outer world only exists as such *for sensation* and that sensation cannot be explained as an impinging of the outer world on my body. Despite the problematic status of the material world in Hegel's account of sensibility, this account nonetheless does have one significant advantage over Kant's, as Greene emphasizes in his book (ibid. pages 84–5), which is that Hegel does not conceive sensibility as a merely passive faculty, but rather as active in the sense that it internalizes or inwardizes whatever it is that is transmitted to it from the inorganic world.
- 26 Ibid. §401.
- 27 Anger is for Hegel an example of an inner affection of sensibility, not an outer one. Affections like anger belong to the soul from the outset in that they do not require the stimulation of a particular outer sense. Whereas the determinations of sight and touch, for example, begin, for Hegel, as outer affection and are then inwardized by the soul, those affections whose home is the soul move in the other direction by being given bodily form

- through e.g. a violent reaction felt around the heart region in the case of anger, or blushing in the case of shame. These, however, take us already in the direction of the feeling and beyond the natural soul.
- 28 Aristotle, by contrast, attempts to use the concept of *pneuma* in particular to construct causal chains linking the body with the sensitive and the vegetative souls. Although his account is incomplete (as I argue in chapters 3–6 of my work on his thought) it is in this respect more advanced philosophically than that of Hegel.
- 29 Like Aristotle, Hegel considers the activity of sensing or perceiving to be the actuality of the sensed object. This means the sensory qualities of objects are not secondary as opposed to primary qualities, or – as for Kant – merely subjective and anthropomorphic. Rather its qualities – taken as a totality – are the actuality of the object itself. Such an account can only be complete with the introduction of an extended ontology, whose absence is a shortcoming in both Aristotle and Hegel.
- 30 Ibid. §402, Zusatz.
- 31 We might say that for Hegel the soul's aim is to be able, as spirit, to say in full self-knowledge 'what I think, I am, and what I am, I think'.
- 32 There are some difficulties about the overall structure of this argument, which will be discussed below.
- 33 Ibid. §405, Zusatz.
- 34 Hegel gives an example of ordinary magic in which 'a queen of France who, when accused of practising sorcery on her husband, replied that she had used no other magical power against him than that which Nature bestows on the stronger mind to dominate the weaker': Ibid. §405, Zusatz.
- 35 An interesting claim of Hegel's concerning the dreaming state, is that though for him dreams on the whole have no interesting or objective content, it is possible for the dreamer to attain 'to a profound, powerful feeling of his entire individual nature, of the total compass of his past, present, and future'. Concerning the child in the womb Hegel says that 'the mother is the genius of the child'. The child's self-feeling, in other words, is utterly saturated with the self of the mother. For a recent account of the consciousness of the child in the womb, see depth psychologist Stanislav Grof's *The Holotropic Mind* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992). Grof uses hypnotic regression techniques to take consciousness back to what he claims are its perinatal experiences. His findings greatly extend the claims which Hegel makes concerning the self-feeling of the child in the womb and its immediate relations to its mother.
- 36 Ibid. §406, page 111.
- 37 Ibid. §406, page 101.
- 38 It should be mentioned here that the phenomena Hegel discusses were very widely researched in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and that there was an extensive literature on animal magnetism in particular. As Sloterdijk points out in the first volume of his *Sphären. Blasen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998) – see the chapter entitled *Humans in the Magic Circle* – animal magnetism had a very important influence on German and French thought in particular, including on each of the major Idealists (Fichte in later years) and on Schopenhauer. (Several of the leading universities in Germany even had chairs in animal magnetism.) The general interest in animal magnetism originated with Anton Mesmer. Mesmer's ideas were less anthropological and philosophical than medical, and he – influenced by the physician Richard Mead – postulated the existence of a magnetic fluid (the 18th and 19th century cousin of Aristotle's vital heat and *pneuma*) to explain the phenomena of animal magnetism.
- 39 By this Hegel here means ordinary knowledge and experience of the objective world.
- 40 That human beings reach true freedom in the exercise of higher thought is something Hegel here takes for granted. That is, however, a thesis which can be sustained only at the

- cost of a spirit-matter dualism, since the reach of the human will does not extend immediately into nature itself.
- 41 It has already been shown that Hegel does not qualify this claim adequately for the natural soul, and it will be demonstrated shortly that this applies to the feeling soul too.
- 42 In spite of this, Hegel does recognize a potentially positive aspect (leaving aside the question of curing illness) of clairvoyant experience: 'Clairvoyance is a state in which the substantial nature of the soul is manifested, and therefore in that state noble natures experience a wealth of noble feelings, their true self, their better spiritual side, which often appears to them as a special guardian angel.' For base natures, the experience is an intensification of their baseness. (Ibid. §406 Zusatz, page 114.)
- 43 An experimentally well-established example of what Hegel would have called the magnetic relation, is the (magical) relation between pet animals and their owners studied by Sheldrake, who has shown that pets are able to react to the intentions of their owners over very large distances. As already briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, Sheldrake has introduced the concept of a trans-individual morphic field – which is in some respects similar to Hegel's notion of a 'universal natural soul', though both concepts are theoretically quite weak – to account for such phenomena. (A philosophically and scientifically more refined conception remains to be worked out. See also chapter 7.)
- 44 Ibid. §406 Zusatz, page 117.
- 45 This clearly has something in common with the 'common sense' considered by Aristotle in *De Anima*, which – if taken as the seat of the sensitive soul in general – is supposed to have its bodily seat in the heart (see *De Juve*, 469b3–5). A further example of the exercise of this sense given by Hegel is the ability to taste foods held above the stomach.
- 46 For very interesting fictional, though at some level obviously factually-based, accounts of a magnetic interrogation see Edgar Allan Poe's two short texts *Mesmeric Revelation* and the slightly more morbid *The Facts in the Case of Mr Valdemar*. Both in *Penguin Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, London: Bloomsbury Books, 1982.)
- 47 The nervous system as understood by biology is, to repeat the basic Kantian argument, after all itself an object of sensation.
- 48 As I will suggest, such levels of being might well enable the basic logic of Hegel's dialectic to be better realized empirically than it is in Hegel's own system.
- 49 It is interesting to note that Hegel does not properly discuss Mesmer's idea of a magnetic fluid. If Hegel had incorporated such a notion into his system (as does the late Kant in his concept of the ether), it would have had considerable implications both for his philosophy of nature and his anthropology. For Mesmer and others it is by establishing a special kind of contact with another via this fluid that the magnetizer (or hypnotist) is able to act as his subject's genius, and so in a limited sense – i.e. only by expelling the thinking life and self-consciousness of his subject – fuse two individualities into one.
- 50 Such an empiricism would, against Hegel, emphasize – as twentieth century phenomenologists have – the need for immediate forms of knowing. As will be shown, these are not necessarily without mediation entirely, since we would be talking about regaining cognitive faculties that – as Plato claims in the *Phaedo* – we once had but lost. The clairvoyance regained would, it goes without saying, be very different from that lost.
- 51 CPR A142.
- 52 Hegel's consideration of the imagination in his psychology, although phenomenologically detailed, shows how he failed to appreciate the ontological scepticism resulting from Kant's conception, since he does not consider it in relation to questions of ontology at all. It is these, for Kant unanswerable, questions which make the schematism into a hidden art in the depths of the soul. In so far as Hegel does consider such regions or hidden depths it is in his discussion of the soul and its associated psychical phenomena. (These might be seen as corresponding to Kant's 'dark representations' – of which Kant says there are

many more than clear ones; see his *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, Part One, §5; AA. VII, p. 135.) It is here that Hegel uses concepts like the ‘indeterminate pit [*bestimmungsloser Schacht*] of the soul’ to refer to the ground out of which e.g. long-lost memories are retrieved, though, once again, he draws neither ontological nor epistemological implications from them.

53 Ibid. §408.

54 The problem of the position of the self in Hegel’s anthropology will be considered below.

55 Ibid. §408, Zusatz.

56 As an example of the distracted mind Hegel cites an occasion when Newton, suffering presumably from overwork, is supposed to have ‘taken hold of a lady’s finger in order to use it as a tobacco-stopper for his pipe’.

57 Hegel’s discussion has many interesting examples in it. See pages 131–9.

58 In support of this claim, consider the following passage: ‘Error and folly only become madness when the individual believes his merely subjective idea to be objectively present to him and clings to it in the face of the actual objectivity which contradicts it. To the madman, his purely subjective world is quite as real as the objective world. In his merely subjective idea, for example in the fancied belief that he is someone who, in fact, he is not, he has certainty of himself, and his being clings to this idea. When addressing a madman one must therefore always begin by reminding him of all the facts and circumstances of his situation, of his concrete actual world. Then, if in spite of being made aware of this objective interrelated whole he still sticks to his false idea, there can be no doubt that such a person is insane. It follows from what has just been said that an idea can be called insane if the madman regards an empty abstraction and a mere possibility as something concrete and actual’ (Ibid. §408, Zusatz). That Hegel, on this definition, was insane follows from:

- (i) His belief that the ‘idea which thinks itself is the absolute and all truth’, despite the many senses in which the idea, as conceived by Hegel, and empirical reality are as yet unreconciled.
- (ii) As a result of this his ‘subjective world’ – the world of pure thought – is for him ‘quite as real as the objective world’, and
- (iii) He believed himself to have been that in which absolute knowing came to self-expression – i.e. something which he was not.
- (iv) If Hegel were still alive, we should have attempted to remind him that in so far as death is his master, subject and object are not reconciled. How he would have responded to this and to the many other arguments put forward above, is difficult to say. Let us hope that he would have had enough sanity in him to have conceded these points and so succumbed to a cure!
- (v) It would be going too far to call Hegel’s system ‘an empty abstraction’, but he did nonetheless think he had attained an actuality which, I have argued, remains in his thought no more than a possibility.

59 In Hegel’s defence, and as I have argued above (see the end of chapter 4), we should emphasize that the madness of his position is that it cannot be stated without resulting in contradiction. Had Hegel accepted this, then he would have to have admitted that his system was far from complete.

60 Most obviously, this insanity manifests as our inability to know the most basic of cognitive operations. Every time we think or perceive, in other words, we live off borrowed wisdom; in Kantian language, we never escape the fact of being conditioned.

61 The mystical traditions of all religions have had figures in them – martyrs in particular – who have lived the logic of love and other spiritual teachings to an extreme which makes them look mad in the eyes of the world. Many of the practices of such individuals would also have been called madness by Hegel, who even cites a couple of examples of religious

- insanity, for example 'the journeys across whole countries made by Indians crawling on their stomachs can be pronounced the acts of lunatics', 'because such a journey is quite useless for the end in view [some kind of fortification of the soul] and is therefore not a necessary means for procuring it' (Ibid. §408, Zusatz, pages 126/7).
- 62 Ibid. §410, page 141.
- 63 'Habit,' says Hegel, 'is the mechanism of self-feeling, as memory is the mechanism of intelligence' (Ibid. §410, page 141).
- 64 Ibid. §410 Zusatz, page 147.
- 65 Hegel's discussion of habit, brief though it is, anticipates the concept of body memory, developed in the phenomenological tradition (by Merleau-Ponty in particular), in which the notion of an intentionality of the body is emphasized.
- 66 Ibid. §411.
- 67 'On the purely physical side,' he thus says, 'man is not greatly different from the ape; but the mind- or spirit-pervaded aspect of his body distinguishes him from that animal to such a degree that there exists less difference between the appearance of an ape and that of a bird than between the body of a man and that of an ape' (Ibid. §411, Zusatz).
- 68 Ibid. §412, Zusatz.
- 69 Although from the systematic perspective Hegel argues that it is nature which mediates between logic and spirit, if we consider the transitions between the parts of the system in their immanence, it is really the sphere of subjective spirit and the anthropology in particular which mediates between nature and logic, since it is only in the anthropology that spirit's immanence in matter is properly considered (via the determinations of the natural and feeling souls). By contrast, the transition from logic to nature is completely abstract, since Hegel conceives it without introducing any mediating categories between pure mind and the material world. But more on this later. It will be demonstrated below that in the transition from Hegel to Steiner anthropology is expanded to include both nature and the idea.
- 70 The problems associated with giving causal status to the different levels distinguished will be considered below.
- 71 We can perhaps identify this conviction with what Nietzsche called the 'will to the conceivability of all being'; a symptom, for him, of the will to power. (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 'Of Self-Overcoming'.)
- 72 Ibid. §389.
- 73 Eventually the sphere of thought or the spiritual itself will also have to be conceived in the light of an expanded ontology, as will be seen when Steiner is discussed.
- 74 Ibid. §410, Zusatz, page 145.
- 75 Ibid. §412, Zusatz, page 152.
- 76 See the discussion of the self and its transcendence in chapter 4.
- 77 Aristotle's account of the human soul as a purely natural phenomenon is, in general, ontologically richer than that of Hegel, owing to the role played in it by vital heat and *pneuma*. In the discussion of Steiner it will be shown how transcendence and immanence can be properly united and so how the dualism of both Hegel's and Aristotle's positions is overcome. (In Aristotle this dualism has the form of an inner-outer opposition in that he considers the self to enter the human organization from without. In reality, however, the self cannot be opposed to the rest of man as inner to outer, since, as argued in chapter 3, the self can know no outer.)
- 78 Ibid. §381. This claim is necessary for Hegel's system to have its completeness – i.e. for its beginning and its end to be the same.
- 79 It will shortly be seen that by transforming anthropology in the Hegelian sense into what he calls an anthroposophy, Steiner shows how spirit can be prior to nature in the full sense.
- 80 It is, correspondingly, accomplished by the failure to conceive a genuine matter-spirit unity.

- 81 The basic principles of dialectical thought dictate that it cannot, since there must be an identity underlying all differences. Given that what lies beyond human consciousness can enter into it, this 'beyond' must itself possess whatever is intrinsic to human consciousness. Considered epistemologically or from a Kantian starting-point, this means that the ultimate substance of the concept and the sensory intuition or the percept must be the same.
- 82 Once again, the image of the resurrection of Christ – of a proper synthesis of spirit and matter – provides one way of understanding how this might be possible. (Metaphysics becomes Christology.)
- 83 Had the world's creation been, in its initial stages at least, mediated, then it could not have proceeded from a single subject. (What *is* mediated in the creation is the possibility that man might himself achieve that position of a creator which Christ achieved through the passion and resurrection.)

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Chapter 7

From Kant and Hegel to Steiner

The attempt to discover a transcendental ontology can be seen as the search for a confluence of theoretical philosophy's three main rivers: epistemology, logic (in the Hegelian sense in particular) and ontology. In the discussion of Kant it was shown that he unifies epistemology and transcendental logic to exclude ontology. Hegel intended to unite all three but I have shown that both his epistemology and his ontology are driven by, but not in the end successfully unified with, philosophical logic – that, in short, his thought is insufficiently transcendental and so immanent.¹ (Hegel thus provides arguments which go a large part of the way towards describing the basic logical structure of the cosmos – how it can be one yet many, self-identical yet full of differences, a subject yet in the form of objectivity etc. – but is unable to translate this basic threefold structure into the language of being.) In the discussion of Steiner I shall now attempt a brief demonstration of how the respective shortcomings of Kant's sceptical transcendentalism and Hegel's dialectic might be overcome in a transcendental ontology which unifies them.

I will focus on its most basic, formal features including:

- (i) A consideration of Steiner's epistemology and his conception of cognitive organs and faculties. Here I concentrate on his attempt to overcome Kant's transcendentalism – i.e. to show how epistemology can become ontology. The main question considered is: What would it mean to know the empirical world in a way which does not presuppose sensibility? This has two main sub-questions: a) What is the world intrinsic to sensibility (i.e. the animal kingdom) itself and how could it be known?, and b) What is the physical world (i.e. the world intrinsic to the mineral kingdom) which lies beyond ordinary human sensibility and how could it be known?
- (ii) A consideration of what it might mean to talk about unconditioned knowledge and so of an unconditioned organ of cognition – i.e. one which has itself immediately for its object. This is the attempt to satisfy the demands of dialectic (i.e. the attainment of a complete unity of subject and object) along with those of epistemology and ontology. Here Steiner's Christology will be decisive.

The discussion of Kant has shown that if human knowledge of the appearances, as constituted by the understanding and sensibility, is to yield more than mere correlations (no matter how complex) between the events of conscious experience (e.g. my experience of joy) and observed physiological processes (e.g. the activation of the limbic lobe of the cerebral cortex), then an expanded ontology needs to be discovered which is able to relate matter and mind seamlessly. This ontology would give an understanding of how the immediate impressions of consciousness (i.e. perceptions),

which provide the matter of experience, come to have the qualitative and quantitative forms they have. It would also show from the other direction how the supersensible or formative aspect of our experience (i.e. the concept) comes to inhere in its sensory counterpart. Using the language of Kant's system: such an ontology would provide us with a schematism of ontological categories (i.e. one including different levels of being with e.g. geometries and a temporal structure appropriate to them) and not merely of epistemological ones.

The discussion of Hegel has shown that any such ontological schematism would have to have a dialectical logic embedded in it. Above all this means that each of its layers would have to be seen as the self-externalization and so self-differentiation of a single absolute subject, allowing it to be said that this subject (or $I = I$) ultimately *is* the physical body and the material world – i.e. that the latter is in no way external to or beyond the reach of absolute subjectivity. Further central features of Hegel's thinking which would need to resurface in such an ontology are: a) Its historicism, or a demonstration of how the world of the senses evolved from a condition of immediate self-identity; b) Hegel's demonstration that evolution (both of human consciousness and of the world as a whole) takes the form of the resolution of contradictions; and c) A telos with respect to which the unfolding of this ontology can be understood – i.e. the resolution of a final basic contradiction. For Steiner this resolution or the attainment of a unity of subject and object is the realization of freedom.

Meeting the challenges inherited from Kant and Hegel requires, in short, a greatly advanced conception of how much reality is accessible to the human subject of experience and thought. Given this book's constraints, it will only be possible in the following to give a sense of what this really means. Of course between the thought of Hegel and Steiner there were some very important spiritual events, not least the life and work of Friedrich Nietzsche, who gave birth to important elements of a fully immanent, yet in many ways non-materialistic, vision of the self. To this we now briefly turn, both to drink from the sober realism of Nietzsche's psychologically based (and inspired rather than rigorous) metaphysics before tackling spiritual ideas of a very lofty kind, and more importantly because his thought contains in seed form convictions which are metamorphosed into a much more complete vision by Steiner. Nietzsche can also loosely be read as a good antithesis to Hegel's thesis – though as always in a thesis-antithesis relation we shall see common features in their thought – with Steiner as their synthesis.

7.1 *Excursus: The Self in Nietzsche*

Following the speculative heights and the one-sided anti-materialism of Hegel, it was perhaps inevitable that a turn would be taken towards matter, the body and dualism in much post-Idealist or anti-Hegelian metaphysics.² This took several different forms, including: a) straight-forward materialism or naturalism (e.g. Marx, Feuerbach); b) Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the will, and c) anti-pantheistic and anti-systematic Christian dualism (e.g. Kierkegaard, on some readings at least), to name just a few. However, one thing can be said, without going into detail, about the anti-Hegelianism of each of these tendencies and thinkers: in so far as they offer an anti-Hegelian metaphysics they do so less by imploding Hegel's categories from within – as has been

attempted above – than by bringing more general, often valid, objections to bear upon his thought as a whole; objections, however, which tend to be the fruit not of an inner need to reach beyond Hegel with an affirming spirit filled with his visions yet seeking more, but of more basic, anti-metaphysical creative impulses.

Now Nietzsche's thought is also far from being an immanent critique of German Idealism and Hegelianism in particular. Indeed Nietzsche knew very little, if anything at all, of the details of Hegel's system.³ However, what he does inherit from both Kant and Hegel (even if only very indirectly), which enables him to be seen as something of a continuation of the major tradition of German philosophy, is a centrally placed concept of self.⁴ In this he thus goes considerably beyond many of his nineteenth century anti-Idealist and anti-Hegelian predecessors and contemporaries, who by contrast tended – in their metaphysics at least – to slip into one or another form of pre-Kantianism.⁵ It was stated in the Introduction that the history of modern philosophy can be seen as different stages in a progressive incarnation of the human self, which in Descartes is detached from the body, in Kant is already woven into every notion we have of the body – though still in important senses transcendent – and in Hegel is (despite his shortcomings) united with it one stage further, as was shown in the discussion of his anthropology and as is most vividly presented in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. (The more audacious and ambitious the philosophical system, it might be said, the closer it feels itself to have got to the body.) As I will now show, the conception of the self advanced by Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* fits into this development beautifully, especially when considered in relation to Steiner.⁶

Nietzsche uses *Zarathustra* to make the following claims when criticizing those so-called Christians whom he calls 'despisers of the body':⁷

- 1 'You say "I" and you are proud of this word. But greater than this – although you will not believe in it – is your body and its great intelligence, which does not say "I" but performs "I".'
- 2 'Sense and spirit are instruments and toys: behind them still lies the Self. The Self seeks with the eyes of the sense, it listens too with the ears of the spirit.'
- 3 'Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, stands a mighty commander, an unknown sage – he is called Self. He lives in your body, he is your body.'
- 4 'Your Self laughs at your Ego and its proud leapings. "What are these leapings and flights of thought to me?" it says to itself. "A by-way to my goal. I am the Ego's leading string and I prompt its conceptions."'
- 5 'The Self says to the Ego: "Feel pain!". Thereupon it suffers and gives thought how to end its suffering – and it is *meant* to think for just that purpose. The Self says to the Ego: "Feel joy!". Thereupon it rejoices and gives thought how it may often rejoice – and it is *meant* to think for just that purpose.'
- 6 'The creative Self created for itself esteem and disesteem, it created for itself joy and sorrow. The creative body created spirit for itself, as a hand of its will.'
- 7 'Your Self can no longer perform that act which it most desires to perform: to create beyond itself. That is what it most wishes to do, that is its whole ardour.'

The first thing to be said about these 'teachings' of Zarathustra is that although Nietzsche's words convey something of the flavour of materialism, his view is very far from that widespread in his time and to be found in the writings of such as Comte

and Dühring, both of whom Nietzsche read.⁸ The body as known by the natural scientist (aided by his greatest helper, the sense of sight) is a body known by the Ego which, 'the more it learns, the more it finds titles and honours for the body and the earth'.⁹ Yet the ego, like the senses themselves which give us our experience of the body, are mere 'instruments and toys' of a mighty commander, the Self. This Self is the active, superior intelligence and transcendental ground of man's consciousness.¹⁰

Nietzsche's conception of the Self is of course not metaphysical in the traditional sense; the very mode of thought and economy of soul in which metaphysics is usually practised was entirely alien to his spirit. However, it is a conception which in its poetic form is nonetheless pregnant with metaphysical possibilities of a very wide reach, some of which will be drawn out in the following discussion.¹¹ Let us begin, though, by stating Nietzsche's claims about the Self more carefully. These are:

- (i) The Self is the creator of spirit and implicitly sense.
- (ii) It is the creator of suffering, sorrow, joy – in short, of man's feeling life.
- (iii) It lies beyond the opposition of spirit and sense. (In Kantian language we might say it lies beyond the opposition of the understanding and sensibility.)
- (iv) The Self is identical with the body, yet not with the body as an object of human experience. The body which is the Self must lie beyond the opposition of spirit and sense.
- (v) The Self lies behind the activities of the ego – i.e. behind its thought.
- (vi) Its highest end is to create beyond itself, to transcend itself.

This Self is thus genuinely creative (and so not blind in its creativity), it is intelligent since it creates sense and spirit to fulfil its purposes and, above all, it is the master of man's Ego. In calling it the body Nietzsche hence does not identify it with what we ordinarily mean by the body – with a three-dimensionally bounded, finite corruptible object of sensory experience – but with a transcendental body able to give itself outer expression, from beyond man's own consciousness, in the many aspects of human existence.

Given the claims which Nietzsche makes about the self, the following obvious questions would – for the metaphysician and the scientist – remain to be asked: How is the Self which is the body related to that known by the Ego, and how can it manipulate the latter with its 'leading strings'? What are these? In what form does this Self have its intelligence and its goals? It might seem to the faithful Nietzschean that such questions as these simply should not be asked; that our task is not to ask what the body-Self relation really is, but to endeavour to make ourselves a 'higher body' by creating beyond ourselves as artists, poets, musicians.... Nonetheless, these questions do arise and Nietzsche has no means of answering them, since it is indeed hard, as Zarathustra says 'to make being speak'.¹²

Nietzsche hence gestures towards an unknown and transcendent Self which he calls the body. Steiner, by contrast, not only gestures towards such a self which is one with the body, he also gives it a voice. Of course this voice is, as will have been anticipated, one which resounds in the language of an ontology of formative forces and ultimately with beings with many forms and functions, which exist in different – though interrelated – spaces and lie beyond the reach of ordinary human consciousness. The question of how Steiner might have had access to these will be

considered below. The current aim is to see how his discoveries can be understood as an ontological fulfilment of the promise contained in Nietzsche's claims. (In this we shall also discover the seeds of a latent Christology in Nietzsche.¹³)

Let us, though, add a bit more context to the discussion. It has been argued up to now that a fully mediated unity of subject and object would require a demonstration of the possibility of a self-matter or mind-body reconciliation, and that the image of a resurrection appears to offer this. In Nietzsche's thought we now encounter a concept of Self which is a) defined as the transcendental ground of sense and spirit, though the relation between these is not considered, and b) is a transcendental body. This notion of the Self is thus set up in opposition to a mind(soul)-body distinction, yet also as the concept of a body which lies beyond the realm of sense, since this realm – the worlds of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch – is its mere instrument or toy. Now this Self also seeks to overcome itself, and one interpretation – consistent with the basic concepts of Nietzsche's discussion – of how this self-overcoming might be conceived is as an overcoming of the opposition of spirit and sense, since it is surely by means of this opposition that any kind of self-overcoming (of realization of the will to power) is possible at all. (That such an overcoming would be followed by a further self-division – e.g. Christ's life beyond resurrection and ascension – is of course conceivable.¹⁴) Self-overcoming, in other words, presupposes self-division. The Ego which finds itself in opposition to a world and to its own body thus requires this opposition as the very means of its (that is the Self's) self-overcoming. ('The creative body created spirit for itself, as a hand of its will.')

What we thus see here is a dialectic buried within Nietzsche's concepts – a dialectic of a self-dividing Self which creates its self-opposition in order to overcome itself. Of course the way in which Nietzsche conceives this differs from the more metaphysical reading just given, especially in that in its immanent form it applies to man's life as an artist – a figure such as Goethe – upon the earth.¹⁵ Like Hegel, Nietzsche did not have the capacity to imagine the resurrection of a body as an actual human-divine possibility. His concept of self-overcoming hence has greatest force as a psychological notion brought to life by immediate human possibilities, not by what Nietzsche derides as Pauline spiritual fantasies.¹⁶ In so far as Nietzsche's notion of self-overcoming has any kind of necessity attached to it (as does the realization of absolute knowing in Hegel), it is in the concept of the will to power. Though Nietzsche claims that this will is a great intelligence, he does not say in what sense this intelligence manifests in human life, nor in virtue of what it is intelligent.

In Hegel and Nietzsche we thus see two figures in whose thought the motif of self-overcoming is central, and in each in an ultimately incomplete way. The dialectic of their opposition can be summarized as follows:

- (i) In Hegel, the self-overcoming of a self-dividing and then self-reunifying subject takes the form of an ascent into the life of thought, criticized by Nietzsche as the mere 'proud leapings' of the Ego. In Nietzsche it is the will to power as the will of a transcendent Self. In so far as these senses of self-overcoming have metaphysical or dialectical value, the first is weakened by the loss of the body and matter, the second by the absence of the fruits of higher philosophical vision.
- (ii) Hegel and Nietzsche both lack an understanding of freedom. Hegel lacks it for two main reasons: a) the logic of self-overcoming (and so of the attainment of freedom)

is seen as itself necessary, and more importantly b) it is a self-overcoming achieved by the Idea itself and through the cunning of reason in history (as Spirit), not by man. It is because of this that the necessity-freedom dialectic is not adequately mediated. Though Nietzsche speaks of Goethe as a spirit 'become free', his concept of freedom is compromised by the fact that it is ultimately the Self which exercises the will to power. If it is supposed to be the Self which is free, then there is an unexplained gap between the Self and the Ego. For neither Hegel nor Nietzsche, then, is it *man* who gains or could gain freedom.

- (iii) In both Nietzsche and Hegel we see a failure to overcome the opposition of thought and sense inherited from Kant, though both resist a mind-body split more than did Kant. In Hegel this opposition is in the end reduced to one which exists only for thought. In Nietzsche it is lost in an unreflective and incomplete assimilation of spirit to the body. (It should be said that in so far as he is a sceptic and conceives a transcendent body-Self, Nietzsche cannot be criticized on this count.) Neither wants to be conceived as a reductionist – Hegel as an idealist, Nietzsche as a materialist – but since they both fail to steer a true course between modernity's Scylla and Charybdis, each succumbs – within his limits – to their respective temptations. (Kant, we might say, thought it impossible for the embodied man to pass between them at all. Steiner, for the first time, shows how this might be achieved.¹⁷)

How, then, does Steiner realize the implications of Nietzsche's conception of the Self as the body? Only a very brief statement of an answer to this question will be given here, and not in the form of a rigorous argument, since this would require building up Steiner's position step-by-step. The aim is to convey the flavour of a fuller treatment.

Steiner concurs with Nietzsche that the Self is the body to the extent that for him the physical body is by far the most developed of the vessels of man's being.¹⁸ This concurrence can be seen as having two main aspects: a) For Steiner it is metaphysically true that the physical body (of which our ordinary senses alone do not give us knowledge) is the Self. However, the actual realization of this truth would require man's being able to assimilate to the sphere of his own will and consciousness the many factors which constitute his physical body transcendently from realms of being lying beyond ordinary human awareness.¹⁹ Man's physical body is thus only potentially, not yet actually, his self.²⁰ Hence prior to the attainment of this actuality, the physical body is a transcendent self for man. (Steiner means this literally, and he spells it out in detail via his expanded ontology.) b) Like Nietzsche and against the German Idealists, Steiner argues that relative to man's possibilities, his spirit or Ego in Nietzsche's sense is indeed in many ways an instrument of a transcendent Self, and that, at the current stage of human evolution, his body contains far more intelligence than is accessible to the Ego. However, for Steiner this body's intelligence is the result of the activity of countless beings, from simple elemental beings to the most advanced of the hierarchies of angels.²¹ It is these which for him lie in what Nietzsche calls the unknown 'belly of being'.

For Steiner, then, the body-Self is indeed a mighty commander and an unknown sage. It is a mighty commander not only because it rivets man's soul life to it in the embodied state in almost every detail of human consciousness, but also because it in the end extends far beyond the surface of a man's skin, linking him through forces and

spaces undiscovered by orthodox natural science to powers much greater than that wielded by his own, relatively enfeebled ego.²² It is an unknown sage because these powers are wise and have channelled the efforts of ages into making man's body into the supreme vessel of consciousness which it is.

Steiner really revives a conception of the self-body and self-world relations familiar to all spiritual traditions (Western and otherwise) which conceive man as a microcosm. What is of importance for us, however, is that much of what he adds which is new can be seen – and was also seen by him – as a direct response to the limits of his predecessors, including Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche, whose discoveries he attempts to incorporate and transcend. In Nietzsche's identification of the Self with an unknown body we of course encounter one of the central ideas of Christology, that Self and body are ultimately one, but in a form so rudimentary, suggestive and metaphorical that it is on its own difficult to make much sense of. If, further, Nietzsche's position is scrutinized philosophically, it ends up collapsing into some kind of Kantianism. (The Self as the unknown transcendental ground of the opposition of spirit and sense.) Yet such an approach would strip Nietzsche's thought of much of its richness. If, on the other hand, we read such passages as those quoted above having immersed ourselves in the writings of Steiner's esoteric and ontologically rich Christology, they can begin to seem like fragments of a vision of man sought by Nietzsche, but fulfilled in the work of Steiner.²³

Nietzsche is of course notorious as the quintessential anti-Christian. Yet his conception of the Self as the unknown body can be seen as a link in a chain leading us to a non-dualistic vision of Christianity as the religion of an ultimate affirmation, not rejection, of this world. For the resurrection should be seen as nothing less than the real demonstration that Nietzsche's unknown sage and mighty commander can be known, so that man's drive for self-knowledge can reach some kind of fulfilment, even if this in turn leads to a renewed effort at self-transcendence. And what, surely, could be a greater demonstration of this-worldly affirmation than God's showing so much love for the earth, the body and man that, through his Son, he embraces them before man's very eyes in an act of resurrection.²⁴ (Of course the idea of resurrection actually transcends the opposition of this and other-worldliness.) It is true that for most of us this Self, this 'other world, this inhuman, dehumanized world which is a heavenly Nothing' ... is, as Nietzsche puts it, 'well-hidden'. Yet to say that it is well-hidden from us is not to say that it does not exist and that it cannot be known. It may well act as an injunction against forming fictitious pictures of heaven and hell, against man's burying 'his head in the sand of heavenly things', but it cannot act as an injunction to abandon the very highest possible goal of the Self's drive to overcome itself – i.e. to overcome its own self-opposition in the form of the spirit-matter divide.²⁵

At the end of his eulogy of Goethe in *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche claims of the nineteenth century upon which he looks back that it 'also strove after all that Goethe himself aspired to: Catholicity in understanding, in approving; a certain reserve towards everything, daring realism, and a reverence for every fact'. Yet he then laments, 'How is it that the total result of this is not a Goethe, but a state of chaos, a nihilistic groan, an inability to discover where one is, an instinct of fatigue which *in praxi* is persistently driving Europe to hark back to the eighteenth century?' Had Nietzsche lived another two decades with his sanity intact he might have come to recognize – as an increasing number of people now do – that the total result of the

nineteenth century, the self-overcoming of its romanticism and later its spiritualism, of its materialism, its national and colonial ambitions, was if anything the life and work of Steiner, to whom everything that Nietzsche here says applies.²⁶

7.2 Steiner's Spiritual Vision of the Self

Steiner's vision of the self is the first attempt in European thought at a detailed ontological synthesis of central ideas of dialectic and transcendentalism, and the altar-piece of this attempt is without any doubt his Christology. However, to begin any consideration of Steiner with his Christology would be like trying to fly out of the womb. In the following I shall hence offer a condensed statement of the basic direction of Steiner's argument. The focus throughout will be on its overall form and structure, since this will make it easiest to bring the main argument of this book to its completion. Given, however, that the details of Steiner's ontological synthesis open up so many new avenues for investigation of the questions raised in the discussions of Kant and in particular Hegel, the following will contain seeds of the beginning of a new project as well being the completion of the current one.

I begin with a statement of my overall argument in its most basic form, and pass from there to the thought of Steiner to show how it might be given immanence:

- (i) The basic impulse of metaphysical transcendentalism is the search for knowledge of necessary conditions of the possibility of thought and experience.²⁷ In Kant's thought this impulse is framed largely in terms of the subject-object and thought-sense oppositions.
- (ii) The dialectical method of thought discovers a basic threefold logic in the relations between fundamental philosophical concepts. These demonstrate that a rational world is one in which the opposition of subject and object is overcome. A possible state of transcendence of the subject-object opposition is hence a necessary condition of the possibility of thought and experience.
- (iii) The synthesis of transcendentalism and dialectic states that a possible mediated unity of subject and object is the necessary condition of the possibility of thought and experience.
- (iv) Since such a unity is given in the idea of resurrection, the possibility of the resurrection as the mediated synthesis of spirit and matter is the necessary condition of the possibility of thought and experience.
- (v) If Christ indeed actualized this possibility, then the Christ-condition or level of being is potentially the most real or dialectically complete state of existence for every self-conscious being – i.e. every being for whom there is a subject-object division.

This brief statement is as it were the macrocosmic version of a Christo-logic, which remains to be filled out with an expanded conception of being. I turn now to a brief sketch of how Steiner provides this, beginning with his epistemology and indicating how this can be transformed into an ontology. The discussion has three parts: the first focuses on Steiner's epistemology, the second on his conception of cognitive faculties, clairvoyance and his extended ontology, the third on his Christology.

Epistemology

In the discussion of Kant it was shown that what justifies his scepticism is the conclusion that man's consciousness in no way reaches the ground of the thinking process itself. (This comes to its most obvious expression in Kant's confession of limitation in the schematism of the categories.) This results in the claim that much of the nature of thought cannot be apprehended by human cognition, which is to that extent blind: it is presupposed in thought's act, yet cannot become its content. If I could have immediate knowledge of my knowing or experiencing, if thinking act and thinking content could be one, then vision would replace this blindness. Kant, however, thought this to be impossible. As a result the true working of the imagination which unites the conceptual and the sensory elements of cognition – Kant's agent of the thinking process – remains concealed behind an impenetrable veil of ignorance. The most obvious negative consequence for the epistemic quest of this veil's presence is that we know only a world of appearances transcendently constituted from beyond our consciousness. In our search for knowledge of, for example, the way body and mind are related, we remain restricted to stating correlations between events observed to take place in the perceived physical body (i.e. the body *for thought and sentience*) and our conscious experiences themselves.²⁸

Steiner responds to this scepticism of Kant by arguing that only if thought takes itself for its object can it progressively uncover its own presuppositions, i.e. only if the thinking act takes itself for its content can it hope to expose the deeper processes which thinking itself conceals. Now what transforms this project into a Christology is that it reaches completion when the subject of thought, the initially fragile ego of human consciousness, manages to strip away all of those presuppositions which conceal it from itself. This is of course a formidable task, but were it to be achieved, man's knowledge of his knowing would be completed and thinking, or better consciousness as a whole, transformed into unconditioned being. It was shown that Hegel attempted to conceive such a form of knowing for pure, *a priori* thought, i.e. that the absolute idea is the unfolding process of thought's taking itself, by actively constituting its own determinations from within itself, for its object. However, thought thinking itself in the Hegelian sense does so free of the realm of sense and so of that dark pit of the soul in which thought's creative light is imprisoned or held fast by the determinations of sensibility. This is the mysterious factory of cognition which makes the creation of a human world possible, and which Steiner attempted to bring within the sphere of his consciousness.

How does he do so? Most of the emphasis of Steiner's early philosophical writings was placed on describing and understanding the thinking process. In the spirit of such thinkers as Brentano and Steiner's contemporary Husserl, he thus practised what could be called phenomenology of thinking.²⁹ Yet what above all distinguishes Steiner from these thinkers, is that his phenomenology of thinking lays a basis for understanding the clairvoyance which grows out of it. This is not explicit in these early writings themselves, which are written in the vocabulary of more conventional, particularly Kantian and neo-Kantian thought (of which Steiner is very critical), but it is very much the fulfilment of their basic content. Much has been written on Steiner's epistemological works (by the philosopher Herbert Wittenmann in particular) and I will not discuss them in detail here. However, for the purpose of the comparison with

Kant as well as to have a few more tools with which to make the transition to discussing clairvoyance, some of Steiner's most important conclusions will now be stated. These are all defended at length in his *The Philosophy of Freedom*, which is his chief philosophical work.

The major shortcoming of *The Philosophy of Freedom* when read as a text following in the Kantian tradition, is that though it claims to be a refutation of Kantian scepticism, considered on its own it manifestly fails to achieve this end. Indeed certain passages of the text seem to demonstrate a basic misunderstanding of Kant.³⁰ However, if the main principles it outlines are considered in relation to Steiner's later, especially his esoteric thought, then we can see in it the philosophical foundation of a genuinely successful overcoming of Kant and, more generally, a fulfilment of the aims of the post-Kantian Idealists. (What I am hence arguing is that Steiner's epistemology only successfully overcomes Kant when it becomes a transcendental ontology.) Thus despite some of its metaphysical shortcomings when seen through the eyes of the philosophical tradition (its ethical dimension will not be considered here at all), *The Philosophy of Freedom* does contain arguments crucial to Steiner's overall position.

The most important of these for current purposes follow from his simple claim that 'observation and thinking are the two points of departure for all the spiritual striving of man, in so far as he is conscious of such striving'.³¹ The objects of observation Steiner calls percepts, and the objects of thinking are concepts and ideas.³² In making this claim, Steiner opposes those who make any other dualism, such as I – not-I, subject-object, appearance-reality, into the basic opposition of philosophy, and he builds on it to argue:

- (i) That the philosopher should attempt to make the thinking process itself into his object of observation, given that thinking a) relates man to the world as a whole by being the means whereby he supplements observations with concepts, b) is that within which he forms a conception of his own individuality, and c) is the activity through which man comes to make knowledge claims about the world.
- (ii) That self-consciousness – the ground of the subject-object opposition – itself arises within thinking and so presupposes it. (He thus says: 'I ought never to say that my individual subject thinks, but much more that my individual subject lives by the grace of thinking'.)
- (iii) That thinking cannot be considered a subjective activity (in opposition to an objective one), since it is thinking itself which results in the opposition of the subjective and the objective.
- (iv) That the percept, likewise, cannot be considered as subjective, since it is given independently of the act of thought which generates the opposition of subjective and objective. (The percept Steiner distinguishes from the mental image, which is capable of being formed only after thinking has acted upon the percept. Steiner defines the percept as 'everything that approaches man through the senses *or through the spirit*, before it has been grasped by the actively elaborated concept'.³³)
- (v) That it is owing to the insertion of our thinking and observing psychic organization into the world-process as a whole that the opposition of subject and object or self and world exists for us.

- (vi) That cognition consists in the individualization of concepts and the parallel universalization of percepts, and that this constitutes the knowing process whereby man overcomes the separation of himself from the world which arises as a result of the particular way in which his organization is constituted.

In *The Philosophy of Freedom* itself, Steiner hence does not consider how epistemology might be expanded into ontology. What is fundamental for him is the activity of thinking and how this can be described by someone simply observing his own activity. Such observation yields the fundamental insight that thinking is the activity of bringing relations to bear between percepts. About these percepts themselves one can say nothing more than what they are for thinking – i.e. what thinking makes of them. We have, in short, no licence to refer to a reality existing beyond either our percepts or our thinking. These must be absolute for us.

Now the Kantian will at this point raise the objection that Steiner has not given any answers to the fundamental questions which interest the philosopher (what is the mind-body relation?, are there limits to knowledge?... etc.), since neither the unities of concepts and percepts which result from cognition and make up human knowledge, nor a descriptive account of thinking such as the one Steiner gives us, can on their own answer them. On top of this it seems as though Steiner has not really explained what it is about thinking which gives it the objectivity which he claims it has. (An answer to this question clearly requires a conception of what the rational is, yet unlike Hegel, Steiner makes no attempt to explain what kinds of relations between concepts are required for thoughts to have rationality and so objectivity.³⁴) It has to be said that it is very difficult from within *The Philosophy of Freedom* itself to counter these charges, and what Steiner claims about his own conclusions does not always help one to see clearly what he is and is not trying to say in his text.

The biggest difficulties for a reader of *The Philosophy of Freedom* who has an understanding of Kant and Hegel will only be overcome when Steiner's thought can be seen as something of a whole, since the conclusions of this text are in many ways only the inner core of a vision which acquires its richness when Steiner casts off the fetters of the language of eighteenth and nineteenth century epistemology.³⁵ It is hence in the context of his esoteric writings that we can really begin to see how much more cognition and freedom really are for Steiner than his account in *The Philosophy of Freedom* states, and so at the same time what the real value of this text is.³⁶

The consideration of Steiner's extensive esoteric output, however, also poses certain important challenges for the interpreter of his thought. One of these is to understand how the language of his philosophical writings metamorphoses into that of his occultism. A second, related challenge is to find a means of access to these writings which allows them to be read as rational arguments by the non-clairvoyant. This is also bound up with the need to provide justification for taking Steiner's claims seriously without being able to provide independent verification of them. Given the detailed background that has been provided to the consideration of Steiner in the form of discussions of Kant and Hegel, I will not respond to the first of these challenges in any great detail. The arguments already laid down for the need to introduce an expanded ontology are more than sufficient justification for taking Steiner's claims seriously, quite independently of his own epistemology.³⁷ As a consequence, the main focus will be on the second of these. With this in mind, I turn now to the question of cognitive faculties.³⁸

Cognitive Faculties and an Expanded Ontology

What is a faculty or an organ of cognition? It was shown that for Kant it is the source or subject (in exactly what sense is not specified) of a particular kind of representation. This answer, however, leads to questions which Kant thought to be unanswerable: a) How do the different faculties form a unity (so that man is not simply defined as a bundle of faculties)? and b) How could they acquire ontological status? Most importantly in relation to the natural sciences, it is for Kant impossible to understand the relation between the organs of the perceived body and our cognitive faculties – e.g. between the brain and sense organs and thinking, imagining and perceiving. What does follow from Kant's arguments as a positive conclusion, however, is that there must be a difference between these: for example perceiving must depend on something which is not itself an intrinsic feature of the perceived body. (The body as perceived is an object of sentience, not its subject.) What this means is that though we think and perceive, in ordinary experience we do not think and perceive our thinking and perceiving. For Kant, then, our cognitive faculties must themselves be constituted from beyond our consciousness.³⁹

In his epistemological writings, Steiner does not solve the problem of the nature of our cognitive faculties, since like Kant he speaks about them (i.e. about intuiting, thinking, observing and perceiving) as a collection of capacities. Although it is implicit in what he says that man is somehow the subject of these faculties, Steiner's emphasis on the fact that man's ego arises within thinking shows that he does not, as does e.g. Fichte, conceive this ego to be the unifying subject of these faculties themselves. This is just as well, since it would have left him with the task of explaining, in the absence of the required ontology, how my ego can be the subject of all of the many concepts and percepts of my experience. In his esoteric writings, however, Steiner makes good this shortcoming, at least from an empirical perspective.

The question, then, is this: how can our cognitive faculties themselves become genuine objects of cognition? The answer Steiner gives to this question is that we have to learn to direct a heightened level of attention at the activity of these faculties themselves, so that the ordinary blindness of the synthesis with which they issue in representations can be replaced by a direct vision of the processes active in this synthesis itself. This practice Steiner calls meditation, and in his writings he provides details of many exercises which help the mind to take more and more of that to which in its ordinary experience it is blind into the horizon of its awareness. What is required above all in the development of these higher forms of cognition, he says, is 'attention and a loving surrender to the content of the soul's experience'.⁴⁰ With these he claims that consciousness can reach levels of concentration in its content which are inconceivable for the ordinary waking state, and which slowly reveal to experience levels of being hidden from the ordinary senses. Such experience Steiner calls clairvoyance.

In the discussion of Hegel's anthropology it was mentioned that he criticizes clairvoyance as the expression of primitive and pre-rational forms of consciousness above which the thinking self rises in the activity of philosophy. Steiner is also critical of what he calls 'lower consciousness such as unclear clairvoyance, hypnotism etc.'. ⁴¹ However, for the reader of his works it soon becomes obvious that, contra Hegel, it is possible to attain to levels of clairvoyant knowledge in which full, waking self-consciousness is not compromised, but rather intensified. The aim here, though, is not

to defend Steiner's clairvoyance as such, but rather to show that its results fulfil the requirement of the search for knowledge that its transcendental conditions should be understood. The discussion of Kant and Hegel has shown that the need for the existence of levels of being corresponding to the spheres of life, sentience and thought can be demonstrated without any reference to the contents of clairvoyant research. Steiner is important for us in this context because he has claimed that knowledge of such levels of being is possible, and so that, against Kant, epistemology does not need to bow down in deference to a lofty and unattainable ontology.

Without going into great detail concerning the contents of Steiner's discoveries, I will now briefly state those which respond to the philosophical shortcomings of Kant and Hegel, and – most importantly – to the attempt to conceive a synthesis of transcendentalism and dialectic:

- 1 Steiner's response to the need demonstrated in the discussion of Kant and in particular Hegel to consider an ontology intrinsic to life, is his conception of the etheric body and the etheric world as a whole. The etheric world occupies its own distinctive geometry (though it is of course woven into the physical) and contains the formative forces which act upon and hold living organisms together – which, in short, make them alive. Part of the background of Steiner's conception of the etheric world is his extensive studies of Goethe's scientific writings (which he edited for the Kürschner edition). Goethe cultivated a phenomenological approach to understanding nature which, according to Steiner, fell just short of the clairvoyance which he and others have been able to practise.⁴² Such phenomenology is supposed to lead to clairvoyant perception (of which there are, according to Steiner, several different levels) as the gradual revelation of a sensory world hidden to ordinary perception. Instead of retreating from the world of the senses, as, in the end, Hegel does in his *Phenomenology*, the nature phenomenologist cultivates organs of cognition which enable him to enter ever more deeply into it.⁴³ The etheric body and world as a whole is, for Steiner, a transcendental condition of the physical world which emerged from it. (The resurrection of Christ contributes to showing the possibility of this etheric world's once again taking the physical into it.⁴⁴)
- 2 The need to consider an ontology distinctive of sensation is fulfilled by Steiner's concepts of the astral body and the astral world. It is in man's astral body that those organs of cognition are located which, when united with the organs of the physical body, make ordinary experience possible. (During sleep, the astral body separates from the etheric and physical bodies occasioning the withdrawal of consciousness from the embodied condition.) It is thanks to our astral bodies that our experience has its qualitative sensory component. (The irreducibility of sensory qualities argued for by certain modern philosophers of mind is here given ontological expression.) All sensory qualities, as well as our emotions and feelings have their ontological seat in the astral body and the astral world in general. In embodied waking consciousness they are localized by the interface provided by our physical and etheric bodies, which the astral body interpenetrates. Immediate perception of the astral world apparently requires more advanced clairvoyance than that of the etheric world, since its substance is one level more subtle and refined than that of the latter.

- 3 Above the astral world lies, according to Steiner, the spiritual world proper. This is the sphere of being intrinsic to the world of thought, and it underlies all of the others as the most fundamental ontologically. The non-sensory or conceptual intuitions actualized by the thinker (e.g. the philosopher or mathematician) have their origin in this level of being. It is also the home of the true absolute subject or $I = I$, the transcendent self which is momentarily actualized (in a necessarily limited fashion, owing to man's embodiment) within the horizon of human consciousness when the self has itself for its object.

The wider philosophical implications of Steiner's thought are, it goes without saying, vast. Each of the topics considered in the discussion of Hegel, for example – from the categories of objectivity in the *Science of Logic*, to the discussion of cultural differences, the different aspects of our soul lives, the nature of madness – could be reconsidered in the light of Steiner's ideas. Perhaps more importantly, Steiner's categories also provide a language – utilized by him to considerable levels of detail – for considering ordinary cognition and such questions as how imaginative synthesis takes place in fully ontological terms. Added to this are many far-reaching philosophical implications of his discoveries, related especially to questions of the basic structural features of the levels of being he distinguishes, as well as to how these might be known.⁴⁵ However, in keeping with the aims of this project I will now consider how Steiner's extended ontology promises a means of understanding the synthesis of dialectic and transcendentalism. For this I turn to the question of Christology.

Christology

The previous sub-section has shown that the true seat of our cognitive faculties cannot be conceived in the absence of an expanded ontology, and that coming to know these faculties and the world of which they are individualizations (just as physical organs are individualizations of the material world) presupposes a meditative path of cognitive training. I now turn to the question of how our cognitive faculties (thinking, observing, perceiving, the imagination...) might be conceived as different organs of the single absolute subject which has externalized itself (in a process of historical unfolding) in the world and the human condition. It is only if such a subject is conceived that we can unite a transcendental ontology – i.e. the claim that experience is transcendently constituted in one way or another by levels of being corresponding to life, sentience and thought⁴⁶ – with the demand of dialectic that reality should be thought as an absolute unity of subject and object.

Steiner's conception of the human organization has four basic levels: the physical, etheric and astral bodies, and the ego. These of course also corresponds to the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms.⁴⁷ Now in keeping with the logic of dialectic considered in the discussion of Hegel, it would have to be said that it is this four-fold structure which manifests the logic of the self-differentiation of absolute identity into the opposition of identity and difference, or of the subjective and the objective senses of the subject-object unity. If the I of absolute identity is the subject, then the predicate is the whole human organization. At the current stage of man's evolution, for Steiner, the actual extent of the reach of the human subject or ego into its predicate, if we can put it in this way (i.e. the sphere of our consciousness), does

not, for the vast majority of people, extend beyond the awareness of the astral body. We are conscious of our sensations, perceptions, feelings etc., but we have no immediate awareness of or influence upon the processes which occur in our etheric or physical bodies.⁴⁸ The human ego in its current form can thus only extend its immediate influence into a relatively restricted sphere of being, the rest of it lying beyond human consciousness, which is thus conditioned in Kant's sense to a very large extent. (In subsequent cycles of human evolution – which for Steiner still has a very long way to go – its reach will apparently get far greater.)

A fuller synthesis of subject and object (or the subject's reunifying itself with its predicate), however, would see this ego reaching right down into the material sphere, unifying itself with the conscious processes which constitute the ordinary physical matter of our experience from far beyond ordinary human consciousness.⁴⁹ (It was demonstrated in the discussion of Hegel that the demand of dialectic is that matter should ultimately be conscious.) This is an end which Steiner himself was a very long way from realizing, since it is nothing less than the capacity to resurrect a body – i.e. the capacity of a self-conscious subject to find itself in its other, or its subjectivity in its objectivity all the way down to the material level. This is, of course, what Christ is supposed to have achieved on that Sunday when he rose from the grave.

What this means, however, is that transcendentalism and dialectic are only properly unified in the idea of the resurrection (or redemption) of matter. It is hence also here that we encounter a proper concept of absolute freedom; not of a limited freedom achieved within nature in the life of thought or moral action, but of an ultimate freedom over nature. Such a freedom does not, of course, represent a destruction or annihilation of nature, but the very opposite. It is an overcoming of nature as an ultimate affirmation of identity with it, and so as an act of pure love.⁵⁰ (Love as the relation which binds me to my other must as such always be self-love. In its highest form, however, it cannot be selective since it recognizes itself in all that is other. Here it becomes free.⁵¹) In the image of the resurrection we also encounter the idea of fully-realized self-knowledge – of knowing which has become being in the most complete sense. So what, we might ask, is the faculty which achieves it? For man it must lie as an unactualized potential buried deeply within him, as what we might call his unrealized Christ-nature. Yet as such a potential it is also an active constitutive condition of his being, since (as has been argued) a possible fully-mediated unity of spirit and matter or subject and object is a necessary condition of ordinary thought and experience. (This is given through philosophical dialectic.) This potential faculty or organ of absolute self-cognition, the unifier of all other faculties, might hence be called the Christ or resurrection-faculty.

In man's current cognitive condition, the synthesis of spirit and sense, of form which has died into matter and comes back to life in human thinking, is achieved most immediately through the imagination. (Thus Novalis: 'The greatest good exists in the imagination.'⁵²) In imagining, it might be said, we play out the drama of resurrection – of the basic logic of our cosmos – on a microcosmic scale. The resurrection itself would then be imagination become fully ontological: the concept of God reaching into its self-alienated matter in an act of reunification and self-overcoming. Here it would cease to be the blind unifier of distinct representational capacities which it is for Kant, and would instead – in fulfilment of the demands of dialectic – become the faculty of self-unification or of the immediate positing of an identity of identity and difference.

What, then, is Steiner's vision of the self? Though this vision as a spiritual reality extends far beyond the capacities of this author, in purely philosophical terms it is without doubt a vision of resurrection in which mankind, having realized its Christ-nature, becomes free. It was important for Steiner that Christianity should not be seen as one religion amongst others, but as a universal and defining spiritual-natural event for humanity; in short as an event with a profound inner logic.⁵³ By considering the theme of resurrection in relation to the need to unify transcendentalist epistemology and dialectic, I have attempted to show how this notion of an inner logic might be made more explicit.⁵⁴

Notes

- 1 It is because Hegel's epistemology is insufficiently transcendental that it is often difficult to know where exactly he is doing epistemology and where something else. In the early chapters of the *Phenomenology*, for example, in which Hegel is supposed to have refuted Kant, the question of the transcendental ground of sensibility is never discussed, as was shown in chapter 2.
- 2 It has been argued above that Hegel can be read as a materialist only because he was in the end a dualist – i.e. he does not unify spirit and matter successfully. In so far as Hegel was a dualist, however, he very clearly erred on the side of idealism rather than materialism. Anyone who claims the contrary can only do so by affirming the negative rather than the positive dimension of his thought.
- 3 It is known that he read Hegel on the philosophy of history, but there is no evidence that he ever engaged himself in serious study of Hegel's metaphysics.
- 4 In this discussion I concentrate on Nietzsche's concept of self in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Nietzsche's conception of course developed and changed considerably between *The Birth of Tragedy* and his latest writings. However, the *Zarathustra* conception stands out in the writings of the mature Nietzsche.
- 5 This applies to Marx and Feuerbach as materialists, to a lesser extent to Schopenhauer in that he does not build in any significant way on the conceptual framework bequeathed by Kant, and to Kierkegaard when read as a dualist.
- 6 It might seem at first that Nietzsche and Steiner are unlikely bedfellows. However, Steiner's encounter with Nietzsche's writings was a decisive spiritual event for him, as he vividly testifies in his incomplete autobiography, see *An Autobiography* (New York: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1977), chapter 18. Here Steiner also relates what he perceived clairvoyantly of Nietzsche's condition on a visit he paid the sick man in his hospital bed. The fruit of his initial encounter with Nietzsche was a book entitled *Friedrich Nietzsche, A Fighter Against his Time, Friedrich Nietzsche. Ein Kämpfer gegen sein Zeit* (Weimar: E. Felber, 1895).
- 7 See *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, part 1: 'On the Despisers of the Body' (pp. 61–3 of the Penguin edition).
- 8 Nietzsche's anti-materialism is confirmed by his claim in the *Genealogy of Morality* (3rd essay, §16) that despite having located in a man's physiology his psychological weakness in digesting his experiences, 'with such a conception one can, between ourselves, still be the sternest opponent of all materialism'. Darwinism was of course the most popular form of biological materialism in the late nineteenth century, as it has been in the twentieth, yet Nietzsche chides the 'scholarly oxen' who take his concept of the higher man or *Übermensch* as evidence for his being a Darwinian. (See *Ecce Homo* – 'Why I Write Such Good Books' §1.)

- 9 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, part 1: 'Of the Afterworldsmen' (p. 60).
- 10 One is reminded here of Fichte's conception of the absolute, self-willing self. Though Fichte and Nietzsche both place great emphasis on its willing, Fichte does so from the side of pure thought and thus spirit, whereas Nietzsche's Self lies closer to the realm of sense. (In general, as will be seen shortly, in so far as there is dialectic to be found in Nietzsche, he tends to side with sense against spirit – e.g. Dionysus over Apollo – in opposition to Hegel, in whom the relationship is the other way around. In Steiner, the balance between these is restored.)
- 11 About Nietzsche in general it can be said that he really combined the philosopher, psychologist and the poet, and that in this lies much of his greatness. Here also lie the difficulties for the reader and the critic, since Nietzsche really falls short of being a master in each of these fields.
- 12 *Ibid.*: 'Of the Afterworldsmen', pp. 59–60.
- 13 This will be by no means the first attempt to give a more spiritual reading of Nietzsche. In his 'Nietzsche and Neo-Idealism' in *Nietzsche in Russia*, ed. B. Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 127–45, M. Mihajlov discusses Nietzsche's influence on the Russian Neo-Idealists – he considers Shestov, Frank and Berdiaev in particular – who made positive associations between several of Nietzsche's doctrines and Christian ideas. Mihajlov argues that these thinkers saw in Nietzsche above all a kindred spirit, but one who had become a 'tragic victim of his own religious blindness'.
- 14 In keeping with the principle that the overcoming of opposites simply makes higher creativity possible, Steiner claims that the creator God himself evolved through his creation. God's Trinitarian structure is thus seen to be the true ontological ground of the basic logic of self-creation and self-overcoming.
- 15 Goethe was for Nietzsche the 'European event' closest to Zarathustra and Dionysus and perhaps the best modern exemplar of the *Übermensch*. Nietzsche sings Goethe's praises in *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §§49–51.
- 16 Christ himself Nietzsche considers as the opposite of an 'afterworldsman' – i.e. as someone whose teaching was about how one should live here and now to feel, as he did, like a god. Though this is of course true, the moment of resurrection is crucial to an understanding of Christ. Nietzsche's criticism of Paul hence rests on misunderstanding. (For Steiner's interpretation of Paul's conception of resurrection see lectures 6 and 7 of his series published under the title *From Jesus to Christ*.)
- 17 In Steiner's ontologically expanded conception of the spirit-matter or concept-percept oppositions, Scylla acquires the name Lucifer (the light-bringer and origin of man's egoistic rebellion) and Charybdis becomes Ahriman, the forces of darkness and matter (the concept is drawn from Zoroastrianism). It is through Christ that these are united – at the microcosmic epistemological level in the imaginative act of thought which unites concept and percept and in doing so resurrects form which has fallen into matter.
- 18 He thus echoes Novalis' statement that 'Stones and materials are the highest: the human being is the actual chaos' (Fragment 378). Steiner's conception of the different levels will be briefly mentioned shortly.
- 19 Actually achieving this is held to be a very far-distant possibility for humanity as a whole by Steiner.
- 20 The actualization of this self which is the body is the attainment of what Steiner called 'Spirit-Man' or, following the Theosophists, Atman. (The Theosophists themselves take this concept from the Vedic religion in which Atman has a status very close to that of Brahman, the absolute underlying the workings of the universe.)
- 21 It should be remembered here that the seeming solidity of our own experience of our bodies and the physical world is given by our own senses – and so capacity for sensibility. Of course even modern physics sooner conceives matter through the concepts of energy or

- field than it does as something solid and enduring. What the physical body – i.e. Nietzsche's Self – really is, in other words, is obviously extraordinarily difficult to say.
- 22 In the ideas which give detailed content to this notion of the body we also see the self-body and self-world relations coming to be one and the same.
 - 23 A further example of a doctrine of Nietzsche's which comes close to a basic principle of Steiner's thought is that of the 'eternal recurrence', in which Steiner sees an anticipation of his idea of reincarnation. Nietzsche says that 'In future history this thought [i.e. eternal recurrence] will gain ground more and more – and those who do not believe it will, according to their nature, of necessity die out in the course of time' (quoted in Steiner's *An Autobiography*, p. 232). For Steiner this claim acquires a measure of truth if reincarnation is considered in place of the eternal recurrence. Reincarnation is, put most simply, the idea that human individuality has a spiritual meaning. Since, for Steiner, humans will experience their individuality ever more strongly as society disintegrates and man is thrown back upon himself, it will become increasingly important for him to be able to situate this individuality within a broader evolutionary sequence: to identify himself not simply with his immediate cultural and social past, but also with an extended individual one. A further claim of Nietzsche's in which seeds of the idea of reincarnation can be found is: 'That great men almost always become master of their epoch is only because they are stronger, *because they are older, because a longer assembling of force has preceded them.*' (*Twilight of the Idols*, number 44 of the ninth part ('Expeditions of an Untimely Man') – my italics.) (For a philosophical defence of the idea of reincarnation see Herbert Witzennann's *Vererbung und Wiederverkörperung des Geistes – Die Reinkarnationsidee Rudolf Steiners in Geisteswissenschaftlicher Darstellung nach Naturwissenschaftlicher Methode* (Dornach: Gideon Spicker Verlag., 1981).
 - 24 This is not a crude pantheism but rather the view that as creator, the absolute subject (I = I) must be present in his creation as a subject which passes over into its predicate. God can only be present in the flower as God, not as the flower.
 - 25 What Nietzsche thus failed to recognize was that it is precisely the life of Christ himself which 'creates meaning for the earth' by overcoming that very opposition between heaven and earth which Nietzsche vilifies. That Nietzsche's relationship to Christianity and Christ is far from simply stated can be seen from the following quotations: 'This is my pride: that I have a lineage... That which moved Zarathustra, Moses, Mohammed, Jesus, Plato, Brutus, Spinoza and Mirabeau is the medium in which I live....'; and also 'Jesus said: of what concern is morality to those of us who are sons of God?' (These are both quoted in Jaspers' *Nietzsche – An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophy*, trans. C. Wallraff and F. Schmitz (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965), pp. 35, 160. Jaspers is quoting Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche's edition of her brother's writings: vol. 12, p. 217 and vol. 7, p. 108).
 - 26 That this overcoming has not yet been fully recognized is a function of many factors, including: a) the general failure of the humanities in particular to keep apace from within themselves with the successes of the natural sciences in the twentieth century; b) widespread industrialism and the *Weltpolitik* associated with it. These have tended to suffocate or snuff out any sparks of a romantic or enchanted worldview from our lives even more than did the grime and deprivations of the nineteenth century; c) the failure of students of Steiner to bring his work into proper contact with the central streams of cultural development in the sciences and the humanities; and probably the most relevant reason of all, d) the extraordinary difficulties encountered by any interpreter of his work. Given the level of its esoteric content, Steiner's discoveries are far beyond possible verification by most people, despite the internal rigour – aspects of which I am trying to present – of his basic ideas. There are, however, signs that this is now beginning to change. These include the explosion of literature connected with the occult and increasing incidences of people

- reporting spiritual experiences. (Richard Leviton documents these in his impressive *The Imagination of Pentecost – Rudolf Steiner and Contemporary Spirituality* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1994.)
- 27 Natural scientific and phenomenological research does not of course seek necessary conditions of the possibility of thought and experience, but rather actual, empirical conditions.
- 28 Even if I could have as the object of my perception the entire causal chain of outwardly observed events taking place whilst I was perceiving, there would still be a dualism between my perception and these events themselves.
- 29 For Steiner's discussion of the limits of Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, see a) the lecture entitled 'Franz Brentano und die Aristotelische Geisteslehre' (1911), published in the series of the title *Anthroposophie, Psychosophie, Pneumatosophie* (Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, 1965) and b) Steiner's book *Von Seelenrätseln* (1917), part 3, entitled 'Franz Brentano, Ein Nachruf', published in the year of Brentano's death as *Von Seelenrätseln. Anthropologie und Anthroposophie. Max Dessoir über Anthroposophie. Franz Brentano (Ein Nachruf)* (Berlin: Philosophisch-Anthroposophischer Verlag, 1921). Here Steiner sees in Brentano's writings an anticipation of his own methods of research.
- 30 Steiner is, for example, highly critical of Kant's dualism and in particular of the distinction between appearances and things-in-themselves (which he calls an 'artificial opposition' – see chapter 7: 'Are There Limits to Knowledge?'). However, in *The Philosophy of Freedom* Steiner does not emphasize that this dualism could only be overcome if we had knowledge of the transcendental ground of the relation between the understanding and sensibility, and that such knowledge is conceivable only within the framework of an expanded ontology. It is a mistake to think that the 'thing-in-itself' can be anything more than a boundary concept for Kant, given that the basic categories of thought and space and time are, for him, all *a priori* and that all we are able to say about the determinations of sensibility *a priori* is that they have a magnitude. In addition to this misplaced emphasis on Kant's dualism, Steiner discusses neither the transcendental logic of Kant's Transcendental Analytic, which lies at the very heart of the defence of transcendental idealism, nor the Transcendental Dialectic in which he tries to demonstrate the limits of reason.
- 31 *Philosophy of Freedom*, Chapter 3 ('Thinking in the Service of Knowing the World'), page 23.
- 32 Subsequently Steiner expands his account with the claim that 'intuition and observation are the two sources of our knowledge', and that 'intuition is for thinking what observation is for perception' (*Philosophy of Freedom*, p. 73). Intuition is the event whereby an inner content of thought is immediately given within consciousness, and in perception, likewise, consciousness encounters its phenomena immediately. The relation of these different faculties will be considered below.
- 33 *Philosophy of Freedom*, Chapter 7 ('Are there Limits to Knowledge?'), 1918 Addition, p. 108. '...or through the spirit' cannot include the products of intuition, given that these are actively elaborated concepts. Steiner's account is somewhat vague on this point.
- 34 In general it can be said that it is the logical aspect of Steiner's account of thinking which is weakest in *The Philosophy of Freedom*.
- 35 Steiner wrote several other works, notably his *The Riddles of Philosophy* (1914), in the style of his early epistemological writings even after the turn had been made towards the explicitly esoteric. However, in these he does not expound the deeper contents of his researches.
- 36 Steiner's conception of freedom in this text does not address the possibility of overcoming the objectivity of the natural world as a limitation upon human freedom. It is instead one concerned above all with the possibility of cultivating a faculty of moral imagination.

- Steiner does not, in other words, give a conception of freedom here which attempts to unify metaphysics and ethics, as Hegel does (inadequately as we saw) in the *Science of Logic*, and as Steiner himself does in his esoteric writings.
- 37 Indeed, I would argue that they actually provide better grounds from a philosophical perspective than Steiner himself gives.
- 38 For an involved and anthroposophically advanced discussion of the relation of Steiner's epistemological thought to his esoteric concepts and particularly his Christology, see J. Ben-Aharon's *The New Experience of the Supersensible. The Anthroposophical Knowledge Drama of our Time* (London: Temple Lodge, 1995).
- 39 'Human insight is at an end as soon as we arrive at fundamental powers or faculties.' Cf. Footnote 14.
- 40 *The Riddles of Philosophy*, p. 453.
- 41 Ibid., p. 466. Steiner repeatedly warns of the many false paths on which one can be lead in the worlds he researched, and emphasized the need for highly rigorous training methods and finely tuned faculties of discrimination.
- 42 It was Goethe who initially stated the need for a critique of the senses. Steiner provides this not only in the form of his esoteric ontology, but also in the form of a purely phenomenological and non-esoteric doctrine of man's twelve senses. In addition to the normal five, Steiner considers senses of balance, movement, life, warmth, the word, thought and the I or self. The notion of resurrection can be seen as a unification of these different senses, and particularly of the polarity of the I-sense and the sense of touch. (Thus when the I knows the realm of the sense of touch as itself – i.e. as its own self-externalization – then it has resurrected matter.) See the first four lectures of the series published as *Anthroposophie, Psychosophie, Pneumatosophie*. See also M. Kirn's *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes und die Sinneslehre Rudolf Steiners* (Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 1989), in which Kirn uses Steiner's conception as a means of providing an anthroposophically-inspired meta-interpretation of Hegel's *Phenomenology*.
- 43 Just as reason is a cognitive faculty unknown to the untrained mind and specifically to the mind restricted to the understanding (as Hegel emphasizes), so it is also with the cognitive faculties cultivated by the nature phenomenologist and the clairvoyant.
- 44 Considerable research has been done on the nature of the etheric body and the etheric world by students of Steiner and others. See e.g. Ernst Marti's *Das Ätherische* (Basel: Verlag die Pforte, 1989) and Nick Thomas's *Science Between Space and Counterspace* (London: Temple Lodge Publishing, 1999) for two quite different approaches. The latter in particular considers the implications for modern physics and chemistry of Steiner's findings. Steiner himself wrote and lectured extensively about the etheric world and the etheric body. However, a detailed philosophical and scientific consideration of these notions still remains to be undertaken.
- 45 I have made a beginning in this direction in an unpublished text, *From Dialectic to Phenomenology*, and intend to take this further as a subsequent research project. Some of my findings are summarized at the end of a short text called *Death and Life in Modern Thinking*, published in the 2001 edition of an annual journal devoted to research of Steiner's work, *The Golden Blade*.
- 46 In detail, Steiner gives explanations of thought and experience which attempt to demonstrate how the different levels of being interact when these occur – for example how thoughts are able, via the astral and etheric bodies, to have influence on the structures of the brain etc. See e.g. the lecture series published under the title *Occult Physiology* (London: Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company, 1951).
- 47 Steiner's own detailed account is considerably more complex and refined. For a relatively straightforward statement of this, see his *Theosophy – An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man*, part 1 (London:

Rudolf Steiner Press, 1965). This book is the best general introduction to his main esoteric ideas.

- 48 The knowledge which natural science gives us of the physical body, let us not forget, is itself knowledge of a body saturated with qualities of the astral world, i.e. with the intrinsic qualities of sensation.
- 49 Steiner's conception of man has a basic seven-fold structure. At the current stage of evolution humans have actualized four of these: the physical, etheric and astral bodies and, for Steiner the most recent arrival, the self. The self's task once it has become the motor of its own spiritual development is to unify itself fully with the other three. Its first goal is to spiritualize the astral body, then the etheric and finally the physical body itself. With each new level it creates a new self, for Steiner. These he called the 'spirit-self' (spiritualized astral body), 'life-spirit' (spiritualized etheric body), and 'spirit-man' (spiritualized physical body). With their acquisition, man raises himself to, respectively, the angelic, archangelic and archai levels of being. At each of these levels he is able to exercise new organs of cognition and knows what for him are new worlds. This is a process which, for Steiner, will require a great many lifetimes, eventually under conditions of existence greatly different to those we now experience. See also Appendix 1.
- 50 This conclusion supports Novalis' statement that 'love is the purpose of world history – the amen of the universe': Fragments, 101.
- 51 The reader might here be reminded of the dialectic of recognition of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Here Hegel lays out the basic logic of love which I am arguing needs an expanded conception of being to be realized.
- 52 Fragments, 73.
- 53 In unveiling this logic Steiner can be seen as fulfilling Novalis' claim that 'There is no religion that would not be Christianity'. ('Es gibt keine Religion, die nicht Christentum wäre.' – Fragments, 557.)
- 54 The actual details of Steiner's Christology are very complex – especially his account of the Christ being's esoteric genealogy. However, it is worth considering very briefly how he conceived the resurrection itself. The arguments above have demonstrated that the knowledge of the physical body (indeed the whole physical world) given to us by ordinary experience presupposes the ontology of sensibility – i.e. the astral body – and that as a result we do not know the physical body as such. Now Steiner claims that the enduring core of this body is actually a body of invisible forces, which he calls the 'phantom', and that it is this body which Christ resurrected. In so doing he is supposed to have reversed or overcome the changes wrought upon the human organization by the influence of Lucifer in man's development (the main one being a corruption of the phantom via that influence upon man's astral body which made his rebellion possible – see chapter 4 of Steiner's *An Outline of Esoteric Science* for the detailed context in which this claim is made). By resurrecting the phantom, Christ transformed it into something incorruptible. (He could only do this, for Steiner, because he had never been tainted by Lucifer's influence.) When Christ appears in bodily form to his disciples after the resurrection, it is thus in his resurrected phantom body. For a man to receive Christ into him is, from this perspective, for him to receive the forces of the revived phantom as an actual spiritual-physical event. For Steiner it is Paul who, with his Greco-Judean heritage, was able to give the first full expression of this. See 1 Corinthians 15. (For the details of Steiner's account see his lecture series *From Jesus to Christ* and *The Fifth Gospel*.)

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Conclusion

Metaphysics as Christology

The basic argument of this book can be summarized as follows:

- (i) If we are to have knowledge of the conditions of the possibility of experience, then epistemology needs to be transformed into ontology in a genuine overcoming of Kantian scepticism.
- (ii) Hegelian dialectic places the logical demand on any conception of such an ontology, that it have a dialectical structure. For the subject-object opposition this means that a transcendental ontology which accounts for the possibility of experience must be able to accommodate the possibility of a fully-mediated synthesis of subject and object.
- (iii) The notion of the resurrection of a physical body and so of a mediated synthesis of spirit and matter fulfils this demand of a synthesis of transcendental ontology and dialectical monism.
- (iv) Steiner's expanded ontology distinguishing inter-related levels of being corresponding to the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms, provides a way of conceiving this synthesis and so of showing in detail how the possibility of resurrection is a necessary condition of ordinary thought and experience.

Since Hegel of all philosophers launched the most ambitious and detailed attempt to conceive a fully-mediated synthesis of subject and object, this discussion has tried to determine where his conception falls short and what of positive value can be taken from it. The main conclusion was that his philosophical logic remains ontologically under-determined, and that the place of the concept of sensibility in his thought provides the best location for demonstrating this. This under-determination of logic by ontology has many consequences for his thought, but results particularly in an inadequate conception of the soul or mind-body relation and in a failure to grasp fully the implications of Kant's claim that it cannot be known.

In the discussions of both Kant and Hegel I placed an emphasis on the influence upon their thought of esoteric phenomena and the phenomena of clairvoyance in particular. In Kant's case I argued that in his attempt to place limits about the cognitive reach of reason he was partly motivated by both a) the desire to leave room for the soul's discovering a new world on separation from the body – in which Kant thought one had good reasons for believing, but about which nothing clear could be said, and related to this, b) his reading of Swedenborg, whose esoteric ontology is populated with spiritual beings of many different kinds. Hegel's relation to the phenomena of clairvoyance was quite a different one. Like Kant he takes them seriously as phenomena, the best evidence of which is given by his lengthy discussion of animal magnetism and his defence of its phenomenological validity. However, unlike

Kant, Hegel does not draw many of their significant metaphysical implications, but instead argues that immediate clairvoyant knowledge is really a relic of primitive, pre-historic man, and does not reach the spiritual heights of such forms of knowing as the religious, artistic and the rational. The substance of Hegel's defence of this position is his conviction that the clairvoyant state is one of illness resulting from the failure of self-consciousness to establish its dominance over the natural and feeling souls.

Neither Kant nor Hegel thus thought it possible that the full clarity of self-consciousness could penetrate the 'dark regions of the soul', and make them into the subject-matter of an enquiry worthy of scientific status. This was the aim of Steiner and the result is a systematic if incomplete body of visionary knowledge which he christened 'spiritual science' or anthroposophy.¹ It has been possible only to give a brief indication of some of the results of Steiner's researches. A more complete discussion would also consider:

- 1 How Steiner's thought can be seen as the fulfilment of the aims of the phenomenological tradition, and so how Steiner achieves the transition from ordinary thought via phenomenology to ontology. Heidegger claimed that 'only as phenomenology is ontology possible'. Steiner's response would be that only as spiritual vision – and ultimately as Christology – is ontology possible.
- 2 A detailed systematic account of the basic structural features of his expanded ontology, including its implications for many of the most basic questions of philosophy – i.e. concerning the nature of substance, causation, time, space etc. This would also require modifying and adapting the basic results of Hegel's dialectic within a framework which is able to unify its threefold structure with Steiner's four-fold – though like Hegel's logic, monistically conceived – ontology.
- 3 How Steiner's discoveries can be related to those of contemporary natural science. Many of his students have made efforts in this direction – in which they build also on Goethe's phenomenology of nature – but much work remains to be done, particularly in the area of coming to understand what Steiner calls the etheric world of ethers and formative forces.²
- 4 A more comprehensive account of Steiner's Christology and of both its philosophical implications and its relation to more conventional Christology and to scripture. Considerable work has been done in this area by students of Steiner in particular, but a more complete metaphysical Christology inspired by esoteric Christianity remains to be developed.

How, then, does metaphysics become Christology? The history of metaphysics has in many ways been a battle between those who have thought that thinking can assign the most fundamental concepts of a language a place within a map or a system of necessary conceptual relations which determine the structure of being, and those who have argued that thinking is in some way or another intrinsically limited; that it does not reach being.³ (Of the former there have been two main camps: (i) those who have argued that although thinking can describe precisely the structure of being, thinking and being are nonetheless distinct, and (ii) those who have argued that thinking and being are ultimately one.⁴ The first of these must insist that concept and percept

cannot be fully reconciled. The second must insist that the concept or thought on its own is ultimate reality. Both fail to be fully dialectical.) In modern philosophy the main ground on which this battle has been fought is the opposition of subject and object, and the question has been: can the subject or self know the object and in what would this knowledge consist?

My argument has shown that Hegel's dialectic provides a crucial aspect of the logical form of an answer to this question: for the subject to know the object from which it is alienated, is for the deceptive opposition of reality as it is in itself and reality as it is for the subject to be overcome. (That the object is a self-alienated subject is demonstrated by its being impossible to conceive the object without the subject – see chapters 1–3.) It is thus for the subject to know the object in and for itself; for it to know that it is the object. (At the human level, it is for me to know that, as Novalis puts it, 'I am you'.⁵) However, it has been shown that to acquire such self-knowledge thinking and being would have to be fully unified, and that such a unity cannot be achieved through metaphysical vision alone. Thinking must, in short, itself undergo a transformation in response to man's desire to know spirit in its full immanence, and it is this transformation – in the direction of the acquisition of new cognitive faculties – which Steiner initiated.

If Nietzsche's human turn signalled the death of God as the death of a metaphysics of thought or spirit still divided from being, Steiner's vision of man signals the birth of an understanding of the man-God, Christ, in his full immanence. And this understanding can be nothing less than a metaphysics of resurrection which shows death itself, the King of Terrors, to be, in the end, an illusion. Metaphysics is thus transformed into Christology when it is recognized that its highest achievement as the life of pure thought – a demonstration that ultimate reality must be a fully-mediated synthesis of subject and object or spirit and matter – must become the motivating impulse for the search for a knowledge of being which can slowly turn the possibility of resurrection into an actuality. In his current state the human being is of course a very long way from being able to realize such an end. Nonetheless, the discovery that I must be the other shows that the odyssey of the self's journey through and progressively further into the world must continue.

Notes

- 1 Kant is far stricter than Hegel in his conception of what can count as science, since he claims that 'in every special doctrine of nature only so much science proper can be found as there is mathematics in it' (*Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Preface (AAIV,470)). Although Steiner does not concur with this view, he does claim that each of the regions of being he researched should be capable of being considered mathematically and geometrically. Thomas' book mentioned above, *Science between Space and Counterspace*, is one of several attempts which have been made in this direction. See also Adams and Whicher's *The Plant Between Sun and Earth*, which attempts to apply projective geometry to an understanding of the etheric or formative forces of plants. Much work clearly remains to be done in these areas.
- 2 This would also be the place for a more detailed discussion of the relation of Kant's *a priori* ether-conception in his *Opus postumum* to Steiner's empirically-based conception.

- 3 Examples of the former include Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Spinoza and Hegel. Examples of the latter include the Greek Sceptics, the medieval Nominalists, Hume and Kant.
- 4 Aristotle comes close to the second of these, though he was too much of an empiricist to embrace it fully. Hegel is its most obvious modern exponent, though in his case, too, there are tensions in his conception of the thinking-being relation, as has been demonstrated. See chapter 4.
- 5 Fragments, 69.

Appendix 1

Philosophical Anthropology Table

The correspondences in this table are in some cases looser than in others. Since we are dealing with quite different systems, this is to be expected.

	Aristotle ¹	Kant		Hegel	Steiner
–	–	–	[7.]	–	Atman (spiritualized 1.) [Spirit man]
–	–	–	[6.]	–	Buddhi (spiritualized 2.) [Life spirit]
–	–	–	[5.]	–	Manas (spiritualized 3.) [Spirit self]
Thinking self: man	Intellectual soul (<i>nous poietikos/ pathetikos</i>) a) Thinking about thinking b) Thinking about perceptions Appetitive soul (<i>orektike psyche</i>)	Transcendental subject (the ‘I think’) a) Reason b) Understanding	4.	Absolute Idea Thinking mind (has different levels) Consciousness (has different levels)	Self – 3 principle levels (though also many others up to the 10th hierarchy) c) Consciousness soul – [Reason] b) Intellectual soul – [Understanding] a) Sentient soul
Perception/ Sensation: (animals)	Sensitive soul (functional description)	Faculty of sensitivity (unknowable)	3.	Feeling soul	Astral body
The living: (plants)	Vegetative soul (vital heat, <i>pneuma</i>)	Formative impulses Unknowable (Later Kant: World-ether. Cannot be experienced)	2.	The natural soul (animal magnetism considered)	Etheric body (ethers + formative forces)
Physical matter: (minerals)	Earth, water, air and fire (their natural tendencies)	The realm of appearances + mechanical forces/laws	1.	Physical body (predicate of the soul)	Physical body (most advanced of man’s vessels)

Note

- 1 In an as yet unpublished monograph with the title *Aristotle: Man and Metaphysics*, I defend the thesis that Aristotle's thought manifests an unreconciled tension between idealism and dialectically motivated hylomorphism. I concentrate on how Aristotle translates the central discoveries of his metaphysics into his psychology and biology in particular, and argue that in the concepts of vital heat and *pneuma* he shows an understanding of life in particular which is ontologically – if not logically – more advanced than any other in the history of philosophy up to Steiner. Aristotle is introduced here as a tool of comparison.

Appendix 2

Summary of Basic Argument

1 Introduction

This book considers the relation between transcendental and dialectical thought and tries to show how the tension between them could be resolved. The representative of transcendentalism considered is Kant, that of dialectical thought is Hegel. The synthesis I offer owes its greatest influence to the esoteric metaphysical system of Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925).

Transcendental and dialectical tendencies have been dominant in European philosophy since the mid-nineteenth century. Examples of the former tendency include the writings of Heidegger, Wittgenstein, the many forms of neo-Kantianism in twentieth century philosophy (including logical positivism) and the thought of more recent thinkers like Deleuze. Examples of the latter include Marx and the Marxist schools of thought (including critical theorists and Adorno in particular), process philosophy and much recent French thought (including that of Derrida) which has been heavily influenced by a lively Hegel reception since the 1930s.

I focus on the metaphysical dimension of the opposition between these two forms of thought, which is still best represented by Kant and Hegel, though the resolution offered will be shown to contain the seeds within it for a proper overcoming of the nature-culture separation which has dominated and polarized twentieth century philosophy. (The seeds of this polarization will be traced to the failure to meet the metaphysical challenges implicitly set by Kant's philosophy.) In detail it is a discussion of Kant's and Hegel's metaphysics, of the relation between them and of the basic questions of philosophical psychology, philosophical anthropology and the philosophy of nature. Throughout the central question considered is: How is the self conceived by these thinkers, and what is its relation to the rest of the human organisation and the world?

Our basic thesis is that to go beyond the opposition of Kant's transcendental scepticism and Hegel's idealistic dialectic (however the latter is interpreted – this is discussed extensively) an expanded anthropological ontology needs to be introduced. The grounds for this need will be shown to be purely philosophical, though the ontology introduced relies on ideas drawn from the researches of Steiner and others into aspects of reality hidden from our ordinary senses. In Steiner this ontology takes a form that can be seen as in many ways the fulfilment of the aims of German Idealism, since in it we are presented – to my mind for the first time in the Western tradition – with a fully immanent conception of the relations between self, body and world.

Steiner's thought will not be discussed in detail, since this would be a project far beyond the scope of this book. Our discussion will focus on the philosophical question of how his thought promises a resolution of the tension separating transcendentalism

and dialectic. The focal point of Steiner's entire system is his Christology, and it is here that transcendentalism and dialectic are finally unified.

2 The Main Theses about Kant

- (i) His conception of the faculties and of their relations to one another is ultimately flawed. In particular the nature and ground of the transcendental subject (i.e. the understanding) is inadequately treated. (Here I follow Fichte and others.)
- (ii) Kant's conception of the limits of reason is unsatisfactory. Reason can draw conclusions from within itself that do not depend upon sense experience. These conclusions are nonetheless limited to a possible rational world in the absence of a completed conception of the thinking-being relation.
- (iii) Kant's conception of the relation between the understanding and sensibility can be deepened through a phenomenological consideration of the imagination which unifies them. This phenomenology can be given a rational justification through dialectical thought. (This thesis has implications for the synthesis of dialectic and transcendentalism that go beyond the confines of this book. Specifically, they show how dialectic and phenomenology can be related.)
- (iv) Kant's metaphysics needs to be related to the philosophical anthropology and psychology of his non-critical writings in order to be properly understood. Although these writings do not form part of the defence of transcendental idealism, they throw considerable light on its interpretation. In his *Lectures on Rational Psychology* Kant posits the existence of a spiritual world and a transcendental subject that cannot be known until after death. His thoughts on this matter are influenced by those of esoteric writers, specifically Swedenborg.
- (v) Kant placed three fundamental limits on knowledge: a) he argued that the relation between the understanding (or spontaneity) and sensibility (or receptivity) could not be understood, b) he argued that the formative forces or ontology intrinsic to living organisms could not be known, and c) he argued that the dialectical use of reason is fundamentally flawed. The first two of these limits can be overcome only with the introduction of an expanded anthropological ontology.

3 The Main Theses about Hegel

- (i) Hegel's dialectical method of considering basic philosophical categories enables conclusions to be drawn about the basic logical form of reality. To this extent they respond to the third of the limits to knowledge presented by Kant.
- (ii) Hegel does not, however, realize the ontological implications of this dialectic. The main reason for this is that he does not consider the nature of sensibility and perception adequately. This leads in Hegel's *Logic* especially to an unreconciled tension between logic and ontology (or thought and being), though this tension exists throughout his system.
- (iii) Contradictions in the third book of Hegel's *Logic*, his philosophy of nature and the first part of his doctrine of subjective spirit, the Anthropology, provide the best evidence of this tension in Hegel's system:

- (1) In the *Logic* the decisive problematic areas are: a) the subject-object relation and in particular the status of subjectivity in Hegel's *Logic*, b) Hegel's attempt to synthesize general and transcendental logic under speculative logic, c) his conception of teleology as a synthesis of mechanism and chemism, d) Hegel's logics of life and cognition, and e) his conception of the absolute idea. Each of these is given an immanent critique in our discussion.
- (2) In the philosophy of nature Hegel's conception of life and the living organism is criticized, as is the transition from the philosophy of nature to the anthropology.
- (3) In Hegel's anthropology, the decisive problematic areas are: a) his conception of the mind-body relation, b) his conception of animal magnetism, clairvoyance and paranormal phenomena in general, and c) his conception of the soul more generally.

4 The Main Theses about the Kant-Hegel Relation

- (i) Hegel fails to feel the full force of Kant's scepticism concerning the ontological status of the phenomena of sensibility and of sensibility as a cognitive faculty.
- (ii) Hegel's thought is not sufficiently transcendental. A symptom of this is the unsatisfactory place occupied by the concept of self in his system and his inadequate conception of philosophical categories. (They are not properly constitutive.)
- (iii) Hegel presents a philosophically much weaker conception of the imagination than does Kant. This can be seen as a significant symptom of his failure to give an account of thinking that does justice to its sensory component.
- (iv) Both Kant's and Hegel's philosophies encounter a limit in relation to esoteric phenomena. Kant implicitly takes these, and the 'dark representations' in which they manifest, as evidence for a world that will be known only after death. (This is Kant's Platonism.) Hegel takes esoteric phenomena for a reflection of primitive forms of consciousness. He thus does not investigate their potential ontological or logical significance. An important ground of this shortcoming is Hegel's failure to integrate thought and empirical reality successfully. (This is Hegel's Platonism and where he fails to be the Aristotelian he wanted to be.)

5 The Main Theses about Steiner

- (i) Steiner's esoteric system retains the central advances made by both Kant's transcendentalism and Hegel's dialectic without succumbing to their respective shortcomings. In so doing, he implicitly integrates them. This integration is achieved in the following ways:
 - a) Steiner provides an ontological conception of the conditions of the possibility of experience and knowledge which is nonetheless both historicist and framed theoretically by the logical constraints of dialectical thought. In doing this he thus [1] transforms Kant's epistemologically conceived faculties into a thorough-going ontology, and [2] embodies Hegel's organic logic in this ontology, which means that he conceives humanity at its current stage of evolution in relation to a possible end of history.

- b) Steiner offers a path of cognitive training which teaches how the mind can come to know the levels of being he discusses. The path of dialectic is really that of pure thought, whereas the deepening of transcendentalism which Steiner effects is achieved by meditative means.
- (ii) The earliest historical predecessor of Steiner's expanded ontology is Aristotle's four-fold psychological anthropology advanced in *De Anima*, where he distinguishes the physical body and the vegetative, sensitive and intellectual souls. Aristotle provides an ontologically detailed account of the physical body and vegetative soul (via the concepts of vital heat and *pneuma*) only. His account of the sensitive soul is largely descriptive and functional (it thus does not fully overcome the mind-body divide), whilst that of the intellectual soul is not so easily reconciled with the rest, since for Aristotle it enters the human organization from without. In Kant this basic four-foldness resurfaces, but in an anti-ontological, sceptical context. In Hegel it also appears, in his anthropology in particular, though implicitly throughout his system, but as in both Kant and Aristotle, in an ontologically incomplete form. (This results in many of the tensions to be found in Hegel's thought.)
- (iii) Steiner's Christology provides a means of understanding how the self and the physical body (or the spiritual and physical worlds) could be fully unified and reconciled. It thus offers an ontological conception of the possibility of resurrection. In Steiner's many works this possibility is given a measure of concreteness by his conception of the past and possible future evolution of humanity. The ultimate constitutive condition of the possibility of our cosmos is, for Steiner, the possibility of freedom. The human organization and the solar system in which man finds himself are the embodied logic of this possibility – which acquired a first measure of actuality through the event of Christ's passion and resurrection. Its ultimate realization for humanity as a whole lies, for Steiner, in a very far distant and barely conceivable future.

6 Conclusion

The conclusion of the book presents the main theses and considers how they might be further researched and deepened, including:

- a) An examination of the phenomenological tradition and its relation to questions of ontology. Here the question of a phenomenology of nature would be emphasized.
- b) A structural phenomenology which integrates dialectic and phenomenology in a theoretical framework whose basic structure is that of Aristotle's and Steiner's four-fold anthropological ontologies.
- c) An examination of the nature of life and living organisms in relation to contemporary natural science, which emphasizes the need to consider an ontology intrinsic to living organisms. (Steiner called this the etheric world. It has been represented in different ways by several recent biologists, but much needs to be done to give their ideas a proper philosophical foundation.)
- d) A detailed discussion of Steinerian Christology and its relation to scripture and to the theological tradition.

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